



Arizona  
Governor's  
Commission  
on **Service** and  
**Volunteerism**



# **The Arizona AmeriCorps Experience Evaluation Report 2011-2012**





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**The Arizona AmeriCorps Experience  
Evaluation Report  
2011-2012  
November 2012  
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SEED/Tides Center  
[www.SEEDimpact.org](http://www.SEEDimpact.org)**



# THE ARIZONA AMERICORPS MEMBER EXPERIENCE 2011-2012

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# Overview



## Executive Summary

Through the Governor's Office on Children, Youth and Families, the Arizona Commission on Service and Volunteerism (Commission) provides the grant-making processes and oversight for Arizona's AmeriCorps State programs, with funding received through the Corporation for National and Community Service appropriated by Congress for this purpose. Arizona organizations that are eligible to receive this funding includes: local and state government; K-12 schools, colleges, universities; nonprofits, community based and faith based organizations.

The external evaluation, the Arizona AmeriCorps Member Experience, occurred during the period between October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012, and provides ample evidence of the positive personal and professional growth of AmeriCorps members; their varied and considerable impacts on people, institutions, and environments; their growing commitment to future service; and frequent "defining moments" during their national service that will surely shape future pathways.

The data for the evaluation were captured using the on-line Journey Mapping© application. Use was made of both narrative probes and sets of self-rated performance measures. Mentor and program coordinator feedback provided corroboration of the member ratings. The members served in a variety of programmatic areas which included: disaster relief and response, employment readiness, academic improvement, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and support to veterans and military families. A unique form of structured reflection guided the members to share and self-assess the aspects of their AmeriCorps experience that made most difference for themselves and for others.

## Context

The Arizona AmeriCorps program allows AmeriCorps members from 18 to 50 and over to prove that they can make a profound difference, individually and collectively, through national service and community building. Together they help create a healthy civil society which offers the hope of a just and democratic world, an expansion of local democracy, and the creation of a shared and inclusive civic identity. Now more than ever, with shrinking program budgets and expanding community needs, committed and talented volunteers are required to serve and to act as role models. Programs such as those funded in the Arizona AmeriCorps portfolio provide examples of empathic and altruistic models of behavior for members while building sustainable communities.

Recent volunteerism scholarship specifically relating to volunteers receiving stipends has looked at how these volunteers contribute to the social economy. Other empirical research has examined the AmeriCorps member experience in terms of personal goal setting by members.



This evaluation moves beyond goal setting to consider how the AmeriCorps member experience can become a catalyst for life change.

## **Scope of the Evaluation**

Three evaluation reports were produced that focused on the AmeriCorps experience for members in Arizona throughout the 2011-2012 funding cycle. The intent was to shed light on the rich and often life-altering member journeys and associated impacts, as told through their varied voices.

The first report was completed in January 2012. The intent was to capture and summarize member experiences during their initial months of participation. Responses to narrative probes and self-rated items were received from 152 members. Complementary feedback was received from 53 mentors.

The second report was completed in May 2012. The same narrative probes and self-rated items were used to obtain feedback. Responses were received from 162 members. Complementary feedback was received from 75 mentors.

The third report was completed in November 2012. Members were requested to provide responses to a different, but comparable, set of probes and self-rated items as they exited from AmeriCorps. Responses were received from 186 members.

While centered on the member's experience, this evaluation also serves as a case study of the Arizona AmeriCorps programs funded through the Arizona Commission on Service and Volunteerism from 10/1/2011 through 9/30/2012. Eighteen funded programs were invited to participate in the study.<sup>1</sup> The invited programs are identified below; for each: organization, AmeriCorps program name, geographical location, funding vehicle, and program-selected national performance measure.

The national performance measures are predetermined by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), these measures were not a part of the Arizona AmeriCorps experience evaluation. The CNCS measures just serve as general background information for the invited program participants. The CNCS national performance measures are: disaster relief and response, economic priority, environmental stewardship, healthy futures and veterans and military families.

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<sup>1</sup> Eighteen programs were initially funded in this cycle. One program through the Town of Guadalupe, an education-award-only program, did not complete the cycle of funding due to the cancellation of a nationally funded program, YouthBuild, through the Department of Labor.

Of the invited programs, 431 AmeriCorps members completed their AmeriCorps term of service. The sample is a convenience sample. While participation in the evaluation was not mandatory, all the programs funded by the Arizona Commission on Service and Volunteerism were invited to participate and to encourage their members to provide periodic on-line reflection and feedback.

- ***American Conservation Experience, Volunteer Generation through Intercultural Outreach Program***, Flagstaff, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: environmental stewardship.
- ***American Red Cross, Operation Desert Home***, Tucson, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: veterans and military families and healthy futures.
- ***Area Agency on Aging, Region One, Los Ancianos: Seniors Serving Seniors***, Phoenix, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: healthy futures.
- ***Arts for All, Inc., Arts for All AmeriCorps Program***, Tucson, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: economic opportunity.
- ***Central Arizona College, Pinal County AmeriCorps***, Coolidge, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: education.
- ***Coconino County Community Corps, Coconino Rural Environment Corps (CREC)***, Flagstaff, AZ, Competitive funds. National performance measure: economic opportunity.
- ***Coconino County Community Corps, Coconino Rural Environment Corps (CREC)***, Flagstaff, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: environmental stewardship,
- ***Communities in Schools, Eliminating Roadblocks to School Success***, Phoenix, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: education.
- ***Communities in Schools, Eliminating Roadblocks to School Success***, Phoenix, AZ, Education Award Only. National performance measure: education.
- ***Mesa United Way, Operation Second Wind***, Mesa, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: economic opportunity.
- ***Northern Arizona University, Youth in Action***, Flagstaff, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measures: economic opportunity, education, and, environmental stewardship.
- ***Pima Community College District, Adult and Family Literacy***, Tucson, AZ, Competitive funds. National performance measure: education.
- ***Pima Prevention Partnership, The Partnership AmeriCorps Program***, Tucson, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: education.
- ***The Nature Conservancy in Arizona, The Nature Conservancy Corps***, Tucson, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: environmental stewardship.
- ***The University of Arizona, Wildcats Corps***, Tucson, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measures: education and healthy futures.

- **Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona, Youth Now! Collaboration**, Tucson, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: education.
- **Youth Count, Inc: The Yavapai County AmeriCorps Project**, Prescott Valley, AZ, Formula funds. National performance measure: education.

## Selected Findings

While the results reported were based on self-ratings, there was ample supportive evidence available through rich narrative responses to validate these responses. The members seemed willing to share their highs and lows and to exercise keen self-reflection.

Further, the ratings and narratives provided by their mentors strongly aligned with those of the members. If anything, the members tended to downplay their impacts. Throughout the year, the emerging results were shared and interpreted together with program coordinators.

**First Months:** During the initial months:

- The AmeriCorps experience provided ample opportunities for members to work alone as well as with peers and others on challenges new to them. Fifty-four of the 152 respondents (36 percent) indicated “extraordinary” growth in **teamwork** skills; an additional 59 (39 percent) indicated “a lot of” growth. Forty-nine (32 percent) indicated “extraordinary” growth in **leadership** skills; an additional 65 (43 percent) indicated “a lot of” growth. Fifty-five (36 percent) indicated “extraordinary” growth in **problem-solving** skills; an additional 69 (45 percent) indicated “a lot of” growth. Fifty-five (44 percent) indicated “extraordinary” growth in **sense of accomplishment**; an additional 52 (34 percent) indicated “a lot of” growth.
- AmeriCorps exposed its members to communities, environments, and life experiences that shifted their perspectives and heightened their personal sense of worth. Eighty percent (122) of the 152 respondents self-reported encountering **experiences new to them**. Eighty-four percent (127) of these respondents self-reported have **enhanced their set of skills**. Eighty-nine percent (136) self-reported **enjoying themselves**. Fifty-seven percent (87) self-reported having **invented a new or better way to do something** with respect to their AmeriCorps assignments. Seventy-two percent (109) self-reported **making a difference in someone’s life**. Seventy-two percent (109) also self-reported **serving as a role model** for others.
- It is often a challenge for organizations to absorb new staff and volunteers, particularly when they are small and existing staff are already overworked and under stress. In the

ideal case, the AmeriCorps members will easily move into their given tasks, work with minimal supervision, and immediately make a difference. The mentors were asked to rate the performance of the members assigned to them according to four criteria (independence, timeliness, teamwork, and being an asset to their organization). Fifty-three percent of the members **worked independently** with minimum supervision all of the time, while an additional 38 percent did this most of the time. Fifty-three percent of the members also **completed assignments in a timely manner** all of the time, while an additional 43 percent did this most of the time. Seventy-five percent of the members exhibited **high standards of teamwork** all of the time, while an additional 21 percent did this most of the time. Eighty-one percent of the members were considered as **definite assets to their host agencies** all of the time, with an additional 15 percent recognized this way most of the time.

**Mid-Year:** To gauge changes mid-way through their year of service, numeric responses by members for the self-rated items were used to produce five composite scores. A sixth score was generated from mentor responses. In the initial months in the program (Round 1), the members were realizing 76 percent of the ideal possible experience. Three months later (Round 2): the scores had increased in four areas, remained the same in one area, and dropped a tad in one area. The members were now realizing 80 percent of the ideal possible experience.

The scores included:

- **Growth Scores:** This score is a composite of four items that reflected recent improvements reported by the members in their teamwork, leadership, problem-solving skills, and sense of accomplishment. Ratings for Round 1 were quite high, with members reporting a lot of improvement, on average, in all four areas. Ratings for Round 2 were even more impressive. In each of the four areas there was a shift, on average, from a lot toward extraordinary improvements. Most notable was the problem-solving skills improvement.
- **Process Scores:** This score is a composite of three items that indicated the extent to which members felt their recent assignments matched their skill sets and interests and offered opportunities for initiative. The feedback from the members was already quite high in January and there was a slight drop in the Process Score in April. The mentors also rated these same three areas in January and April. These independent mentor ratings were slightly but consistently higher than those of the members.
- **Outcome Scores:** This score is a composite of six items that expressed what members felt they had gained recently in terms of deeper understanding of the service sector and

their specific communities, contributions they had made to their sites and to the community or environment, their personal or professional growth, and their clarity regarding personal future directions. In April, the members reported the same or modest increases in accomplishments from those reported in January. Their ratings in both periods were quite high. The biggest change was a slight rise in their reports of making a contribution to the community (or environment). The independent ratings by the mentors closely matched those of the members.

- **Richness Scores:** This score is a composite of six items reflecting recent member experiences related to encountering something new, increasing their skills, enjoying themselves, inventing a new or better way to perform a task, making a difference for another, and serving as a mentor. On average, around 80 percent of the members reported having these experiences in both rounds. The mentors reported near identical results as the members in the two rounds based on their observations.
- **Defining Moment Scores:** This score is a unique blending of nine of the 19 items as a predictor that members were having life-transforming experiences. Viewed as a probability, the April results suggest that members, on average, had an 80 percent chance of having a defining moment during the past two months, as contrasted with a 76 percent chance during their initial months.
- **Performance Scores:** This score is a composite of four items from mentor ratings that indicated abilities of members to function independently, complete assignments in timely manner, work well in teams, and be assets to their sites. The results were strongly positive and similar for the two rounds.

**Year-End:** Given these strong member experiences initially and mid-way through the year, it was not surprising that their responses during the exit survey were also strongly favorable.

- The vast majority of the members (145 of 186, or 78 percent) reported that their **growth** was extraordinary. An additional 18 percent (33 of 186) reported a lot of growth. The complementary narrative responses to the probe, “What made it a positive growth experience for you?” clearly illustrate that these exceptionally high ratings were not exaggerated. The members described rich learning opportunities in areas new to them. They were encouraged to take initiative and stretch their limits. They served communities and populations with which they often had no prior experience. They reported newly gained confidence, enhanced skill sets, and personal experiences that were life-transforming.

- The vast majority of the members (142 of 186, or 76 percent) felt that **the differences they made** were extraordinary. An additional 25 percent (36 of 186) reported a lot of impact. The complementary narrative responses to the probe, “What is the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face?” resulted in several heart-warming responses. In these cases, the members were certain that they had touched the lives of another or others in profound ways. Others reported mastering skills or successfully performing tasks that they felt at the time were well beyond their capabilities. Still others focused on the innovations they had brought to their host organizations or at schools or other institutions they served.
- The vast majority of the members (130 of 186, or 70 percent) reported that their AmeriCorps experiences had an extraordinary influence on their **commitment to volunteering in the future**. An additional 24 percent (44 of 186) reported a lot of influence on their future actions. The complementary narrative responses to the probe, “What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year and in the future?” led to a variety of answers. Quite a few members indicated they would continue working with the same or a similar organization in the coming year. Many were still vague about their immediate future while insisting that volunteerism would definitely be a component of that future.
- The vast majority of the members (145 of 186, or 78 percent) reported that their AmeriCorps experiences had made them either **more employable or a more capable volunteer**. An additional 15 percent (28 of 186) reported a lot of value added. The complementary narrative responses to the probe, “How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?” produced mostly optimistic forecasts. Some pointed to full-time employment they had already secured due at least in part to their service with AmeriCorps. Many indicated having greatly expanded networks and stronger resumes, as well as deeper understanding of what they can contribute to the nonprofit world.

### **Suggestion for a Future Impact Evaluation**

AmeriCorps members impact the lives of children, teens, and seniors in multiple ways. They assist the disabled and military families. They do conservation to improve or protect the environment. They raise awareness regarding the importance and value of community service.

The amount of impact that the members produce throughout their year of service, contrasted with the relative low cost of the program, borders on the extraordinary. Few government-

sponsored programs can produce such a high social return on investment. The challenge is to produce the hard data to demonstrate this in a compelling and convincing way.





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# Evaluation Report #1

## January 2012



## Overview

This is the first of a series of evaluation reports that focus on the AmeriCorps experience for members in Arizona throughout the 2011-2012 funding cycle. The intent is to shed light on the rich and often life-altering member journeys, as told through their varied voices. To gain most from this report, the reader should examine the hard data, enjoy exploring the entries, but mostly intuit the shared spirit of service and joy and the collective impact reflected through the accounts of the members.

Two sources of data were used to produce this report. First, all AmeriCorps members were encouraged to provide feedback on recent experiences through their responses to four narrative probes and 19 rated items. Second, their mentors were also encouraged to provide similar narrative and quantitative feedback based on their observations of the members. A secure website was used for both sets of entries.

Feedback was received from 152 AmeriCorps members representing 12 programs in Arizona. Included were 111 females and 37 males (four anonymous respondents did not indicate their gender); 74 members ages 17-25, 41 members ages 26-49, and 36 members ages 50 or older (one respondent did not indicate age); and 101 members from Arizona and 50 members from out-of-state (one respondent did not indicate home state). The vast majority were first-year members. Feedback was also received from 53 mentors from seven of these programs.

## Growth of Members

"I have been serving as a crewmember on a trail crew. I have worked on a variety of projects, from rock and tread work that included building a large staircase, numerous check steps and water bars, to brushing back country trails and fuel thinning of private lands. I have developed many skills and have enjoyed getting to work all over the state of Arizona."

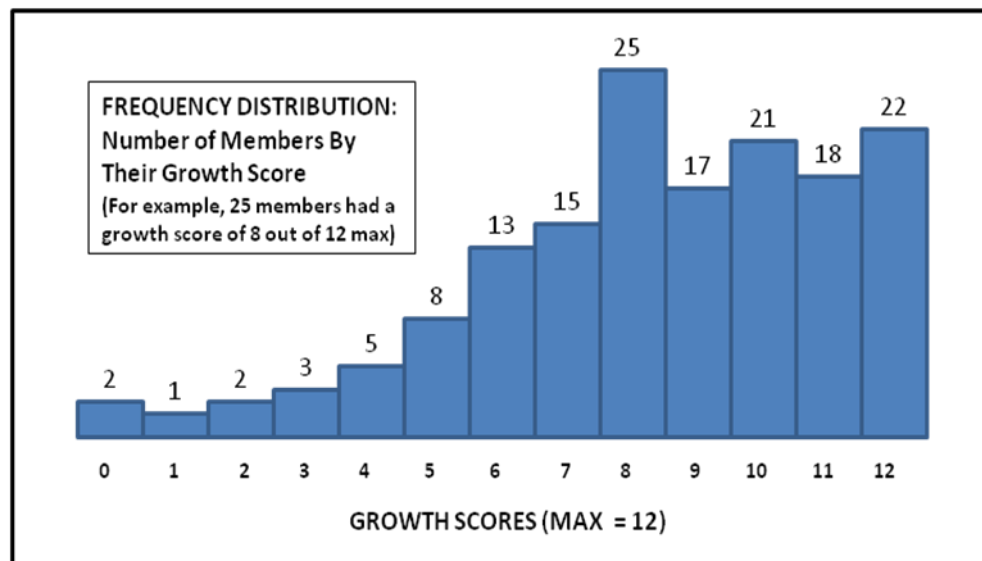
"I have been giving in-class presentations on groundwater for third graders and teaching four different water lessons on third grade field trips. I have been working with three other AmeriCorps members. The lessons are very interactive—third graders are an awesome mix of curious and excited and love to participate. I have been passionately teaching water lessons to the fullest extent and engaging students for lifelong lessons on water conservation and knowledge."

The AmeriCorps experience provides ample opportunities for members to work alone as well as with peers and others on challenges new to them. Although most of the members were in AmeriCorps for only a few months, considerable growth was already self-reported across all four categories investigated (teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and sense of accomplishment). See Tables 1-4 in Appendix 1 for complete results.

- Fifty-four (54) of the 152 respondents (36 percent) indicated "extraordinary" growth in **teamwork** skills; while an additional 59 (39 percent) indicated "a lot of" growth in this area. Similar ratings existed across gender and home state. Members in the 50+ age group self-reported slightly more growth than the others.

- Forty-nine (49) of the 152 respondents (32 percent) indicated “extraordinary” growth in **leadership** skills; while an additional 65 (43 percent) indicated “a lot of” growth in this area. Female members self-reported slightly more growth than males, in-state members reported more growth than those from out-of-state, and the 50+ age group reported more growth than the others.
- Fifty-five (55) of the 152 respondents (36 percent) indicated “extraordinary” growth in **problem-solving** skills; while an additional 69 (45 percent) indicated “a lot of” growth in this area. Male members self-reported slightly more growth than females. Similar ratings existed across age and home state.
- Fifty-five (67) of the 152 respondents (44 percent) indicated “extraordinary” growth in **sense of accomplishment**; while an additional 52 (34 percent) indicated “a lot of” growth in this area. Females self-reported slightly higher growth than males, the 50+ age group reported more growth than the others, and the in-state members reported more growth than the others.
- Combining all four categories, the 50+ age group reported more growth than the others; in-state members more growth than those from out-of-state; and females slightly more growth than males.

A “growth score” was computed for each respondent by assigning 3 points to any of the four growth areas self-reported as “extraordinary” growth, 2 points to any area reported as “a lot of” growth, 1 point to any area reported as “a bit of” growth, and no points to any area reported as “no” growth. The maximum points that could be earned were 12 (3 points for each of four growth categories). As the following chart indicates, the majority of the members (103 or 68 percent) scored 8 points or higher.



## Experiences of Members

"My most enjoyable experience was creating a child safety car seat brochure. It allowed me to make my own judgment when it comes to what information is important and how it's presented to the public in a way that is easy to read and understand. I was also able to pick and choose pictures that would help enhance the brochure overall and make it interesting to read and use for everyone."

"I am currently going to school to be a school teacher. i want to teach history at a high school level and one day work my way up to be a college professor. The most enjoyable experience i had was working in the class room and actually being allowed to help teach some of the assignments. It gave me a wonderful hands-on experience and an idea of what to expect when I finally reach my goal of becoming a teacher and helping students of my own."

AmeriCorps exposes its members to communities, environments, and life experiences that shift their perspectives and heighten their personal sense of worth. The members were presented with six aspects of such experiences (newness, skill enhancement, their enjoyment, opportunity to invent, making a difference, and serving as a role model) and asked to indicate which of these they had personally encountered during the past few months in AmeriCorps. See Table 5 in Appendix 1 for the full set of responses.

- Eighty percent (122) of the 152 respondents self-reported encountering **experiences new to them**. Similar percents were reported by gender and home state. The 50+ age group reported a lower percent (64 percent) than the younger two groups.
- Eighty-four percent (127) of these respondents self-reported have **enhanced their set of skills**. The 17-24 age group reported a higher percent (91 percent) than the two older groups. There were no standout differences by gender or home state.
- Eighty-nine percent (136) of the respondents self-reported **enjoying themselves**. The 50+ age group reported a lower percent (75 percent) than either the 26-49 group (87 percent) or the 17-25 group (97 percent). There were no standout differences by gender or home state.
- Fifty-seven percent (87) of the 152 respondents self-reported having **invented a new or better way to do something** with respect to their AmeriCorps assignments. Males reported a higher percent (62 percent) than females (56 percent). The 50+ age group reported a much lower percent (33 percent) than either the 26-49 group (56 percent) or the 17-25 group (70 percent). The out-of-state members reported a higher percent (68 percent) than those from Arizona (51 percent).
- Seventy-two percent (109) of the 152 respondents self-reported **making a difference in someone's life**. The female members reported a higher percent (73 percent) than their male counterparts (68 percent). The 50+ age group reported a higher percent (78 percent) than either the 26-49 age group (63 percent) or the 17-25 age group (73 percent). The in-state members reported a higher percent (77 percent) than those from out-of-state (60 percent).

- Seventy-two percent (109) of the respondents also self-reported **serving as a role model** for others. There were no standout differences by gender or home state. However, the 17-25 age group reported a higher percent (80 percent) than either of the other two age groups.

Their mentors independently observed similar findings with regard to these experiences (see Table 6 in Appendix 1). They indicated that 83 percent of their mentees had encountered work experiences new to them; 89 percent had enhanced their skill sets; 87 percent seemed to enjoy themselves; 55 percent had invented a new or better way to do something; 79 percent had made a difference in someone else's life; and 62 percent had served as a role model. Only with regard to this last experience were their observations somewhat different from those self-reported by the members (62 percent versus 72 percent).

## Performance of Members

"Although there are a number of accomplishments that our member has achieved, including inspiring students to be recycling recruiters and facilitating a student-developed exhibit on the evolution of writing and technology, her development of our program systems for scheduling and operations has had the most impact on the entire program and on all the students. She has really reinvented these. Because of her creativity and practicality, the kids have a more engaging and stimulation experience during their time here."

"One female member has been the take-charge leader of the group. She is proactive and thoughtful and is always the first to volunteer whether it be learning a new skill or initiating a project. I gave her a book on stream restoration techniques and she went out and built the structures and applied the principles perfectly."

It is often a challenge for organizations to absorb new staff and volunteers, particularly when they are small and existing staff are already overworked and under stress. In the ideal case, the AmeriCorps members will easily move into their given tasks, work with minimal supervision, and immediately make a difference. The mentors were asked to rate the performance of the members assigned to them according to four criteria (independence, timeliness, teamwork, and being an asset to their organization). Their responses are arrayed in Table 7 of Appendix 1. They indicated the following:

- Fifty-three percent of the members worked independently with minimum supervision all of the time, while an additional 38 percent did this most of the time.
- Fifty-three percent of the members also completed assignments in a timely manner all of the time, while an additional 43 percent did this most of the time.
- Seventy-five percent of the members exhibited high standards of teamwork all of the time, while an additional 21 percent did this most of the time.
- Eighty-one percent of the members were considered as definite assets to their host agencies all of the time, with an additional 15 percent recognized this way most of the time.

## Success Measures

“Planting an orchard with 70-plus volunteers has been one of my most rewarding experiences so far. Families and individuals planted over 40 fruit trees in an hour, a huge feat! Afterward, many stayed on to help plant potatoes for the market and others expressed surprise that certain trees grew in Arizona and left the farm to buy a fruit tree to plant at their homes the same day. That to me was a huge success! “

“My most challenging thing has been to build an employment resource center for veterans from the ground up. I have found the partners, designed the layout, written the policies and procedures, and laid the ground work for outreach of clients and employers. All of the hard work and effort really pay off every time I hear from a client who tells me they have become employed.”

In evaluating a program, it is useful to distinguish between success measures that one would “expect to see” (most often in the form of process measures), those one would “like to see” (most often expressed as output measures), and those one would “love to see” (most often expressed in terms of outcome measures). The 152 members self-rated their current situation against nine such measures by indicating whether each of these was achieved fully, partly, or not at all. These results are arrayed in Tables 8-16 in Appendix 1. Here are some highlights:

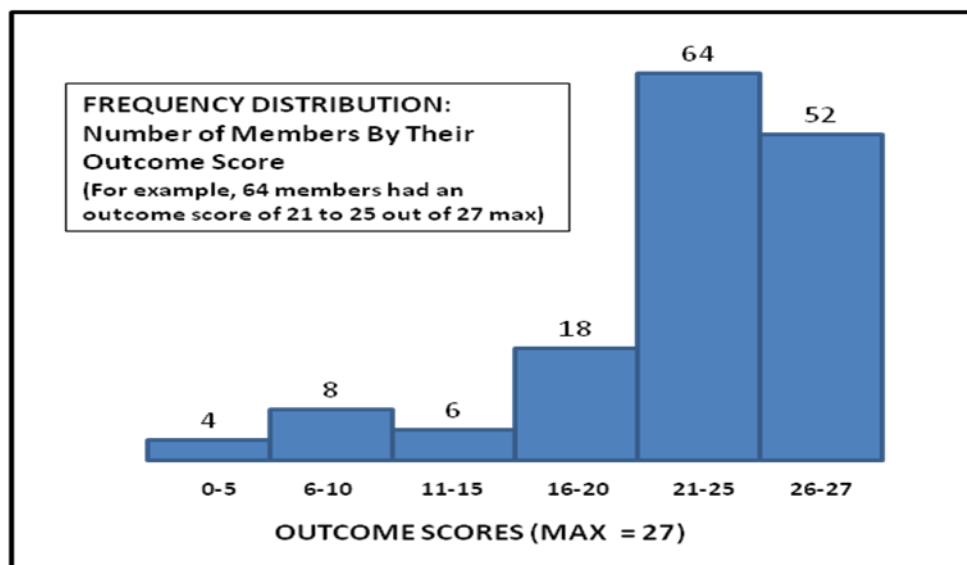
- Process: Eighty-five percent of the members (129) indicated that they were assigned activities appropriate to their skill sets. Eighty-two percent (124) indicated that these activities also were appropriate to their interests.
- Process: Seventy-nine percent of the members (120) indicated that they were given freedom to be inventive and to take initiative.
- Output: Seventy-nine percent of the members (120) felt they had better understanding of how service organizations work as a result of recent AmeriCorps experiences. This was somewhat less the case for the 17-25 age group than for the older age groups.
- Output: Seventy percent (107) felt they were making significant contributions to their sites. This was more the case for the 51+ age group (83 percent) than the 26-49 age group (63 percent) and the 17-25 age group (69 percent). This was also more the case for in-state members (75 percent) than out-of-state members (64 percent).
- Output: Eighty-three percent of the members (126) felt that they had learned a lot about the community or the environment in which they performed services.
- Outcome: Sixty-seven percent (102) felt they were making significant contributions to these communities or environments. This was more the case for females (72 percent) than males (57 percent), for in-state members (73 percent) versus out-of-state members (56 percent), and for the 50+ age group (75 percent) versus the younger two groups (65 percent).
- Outcome: Seventy-nine percent of the members (120) indicated that they had grown professionally or personally, and an additional 16 percent felt they had grown a bit.



- Outcome: Sixty-seven percent (102) felt they had a better sense of what they would like to do in the future. This was more the case for males (73 percent) than females (67 percent), for in-state members (71 percent) versus out-of state members (62 percent), and for the 26-49 age group (78 percent) versus the 51+ age group (72 percent) and 17-25 age group (60 percent).

Their mentors independently observed similar findings with regard to these measures (see Table 17 in Appendix 1). They indicated that 89 percent of members had been assigned work appropriate to their skill levels (as contrasted with 85 percent as self-reported by members); 81 percent has been assigned work appropriate to their interests (82 percent self-reported); 89 percent had been given freedom to be inventive and take initiative (79 percent self-reported); 72 percent had better understanding of how service organizations work (79 percent self-reported); 70 percent had made significant contributions to the community or environment (67 percent self-reported); 67 percent had grown professionally and personally (69 percent self-reported); and 45 percent had a better sense of what their mentees would like to do in the future (67 percent self-reported).

An “outcome score” was computed for each respondent by assigning 3 points to any of these nine items self-reported as “yes”, 1 point to any item reported as “part”, and no points to any area reported as “no”.. The maximum points that could be earned were 27 (3 points for each of the nine items). As the chart indicates, the majority of the members (116 or 76 percent) scored 21 points or higher.



## Narrative Responses

The 152 members completed narrative response to four probes. These were:

- ❖ Describe in brief your last few months in AmeriCorps. What have you been working on? Who have you been working with? What difference have you made?
- ❖ What was your most enjoyable or challenging experience?
- ❖ If you could design the ideal volunteer experience, what changes would you make with regard to your current AmeriCorps assignment?
- ❖ What do you see yourself doing next after AmeriCorps? How have recent experiences in AmeriCorps been preparing you for this?

A very large sample of their responses is provided in Appendix 2. The members were near unanimous in finding their AmeriCorps experiences to be rewarding. This is certainly due to the immediacy of the impacts most are making, whether clearing a wilderness trail, providing food and clothing to families in need, or helping a struggling student with language or math. Their complaints were few and, in most instances, seemed to resolve themselves as the members adjusted to their assignments. There was definite interest in engaging more with other AmeriCorps members to share experiences and learning. However, only in a few cases did members feel they were isolated and wanted more team experiences. The vast majority indicated that their experiences were definitely preparing them for the future, and several were clear that they wanted to remain engaged in this type of service work as volunteers or professionals.

The 53 mentors were also asked to make narrative responses to three probes. These were:

- ❖ To what extent are the member(s) you mentor failing to meet, meeting, or surpassing your expectations? Explain your response.
- ❖ Please share a single accomplishment of a member that stands out. Why did you pick this one to share?
- ❖ If you could design the ideal volunteer experience, what changes would you make with regard to your AmeriCorps program?

A large sample of their responses is provided in Appendix 3. In general, the mentors were quite enthusiastic about the dedication, skill sets, and accomplishments of the members. In only a few cases, the mentors felt that a member assigned to them needed to take more initiative. Some noted a desire to have had more lead time to orient and train members prior to intensity of the program year. Overall, they were generous with their praise for the members as individuals and as program assets. Several examples were provided of activities that likely would not have taken place or taken place so well without the talents and energies that the members brought to the tasks.

## Spontaneous Feedback

The members were also invited to provide any final comments regarding their AmeriCorps experiences. Here is a sample of what they offered:

- So far so good. As this is my second year, I had such a rewarding first year and so signed up for a second...as a result, it is safe to say my ambitions for the program and where we go from here are soaring.
- This opportunity affords me personal growth, and utilization of my skills and passions.
- Being an AC Member has allowed me to sharpen my people skills and take leadership roles.
- I wholly embrace my experience, and the leadership of my program's Director.
- My time with Americorps has allowed me to grow in a different capacity, one I never thought I was capable of doing. I love working with these seniors; they are so special. I am so happy I can give them something to look forward. One woman told me the only time she laughs is when she comes to the program--that works for me.
- I would make the hours required less than 900 -- that is too many for most of us over 55.
- AmeriCorps is proving to be invaluable in providing much needed services to the aging population. It has increased the program's ability to serve more neighbors.
- AmeriCorps has given me the best opportunities I've had in years!
- I am enjoying my experiences this last year. I have met many new people, both as peers and as clients. It has broadened my experiences to a great degree.
- AmeriCorps is the best decision I have ever made. I finally have found a place where I feel I fit and can use my skills and abilities to benefit others. I love leaving every day knowing that I put a smile on so many faces.
- It is very fast paced, hard work but at the same time, it is rewarding and enjoyable. I find that I have learned a lot more at this job, especially because of how much time and energy this job requires.
- I would just like to say that I am very grateful for having the opportunity to be a part of such a wonderful program. It taught me a lot and I feel accomplished at being able to have helped high school and college students follow their dreams and help them with their schooling the way this program has helped me.
- I have had a great time as an AmeriCorps member. I am thankful for the opportunity of helping out students with their studies.
- I have really enjoyed my time with AmeriCorps and would recommend others to join. I've made several amazing friends.
- I have noticed there are numerous students who need help in many areas. There is so much to teach but very little help for them.
- I think that Americorps is one of the best programs that young people can participate in. I'm so happy it exists!
- In just the first few months of my AmeriCorps experience, I have already grown so much as a person.

- I have enjoyed my experience working with AmeriCorps and I have improved many of my skills working with children and people.
- I just enjoy doing the work that I do. The staff members of my program are very supportive and caring towards me. They help me as much as possible in caring for the children.
- I really appreciate the opportunity to work with the organization. It is such a wonderful working environment. As hard as it is trying to juggle this with school, I am glad I'm doing it. I want to do it again next year.
- I only have one qualm. The wages should at least be minimum wage.
- I am thoroughly enjoying my AmeriCorps volunteer time and I am grateful for the new challenges that I am experiencing.
- It is my privilege and pleasure to be able to serve my community through this AmeriCorps program.
- We have the greatest support system. The program team has been kind, helpful, and made the people we interact with into one of the best aspects of the job.
- I couldn't have asked for a more positive, creative, and welcoming environment. The people with whom I work are inspiring.
- I am very pleased with the success of our environmental project. I am happy to be a part of this project, and the work I have done for this project has made me consider furthering my involvement in projects such as this in the future.
- This is the best place I have ever worked. Every AmeriCorps experience I have had has been overwhelmingly positive and has helped me to grow as a person and focus my interests. AmeriCorps is one of our best programs for young people and we need to do everything we can to preserve it and the opportunities it provides.
- It has been a joyful experience and I have met a lot of well-educated and interesting people.
- Working in an office environment can easily cordon off someone to the remainder of the coworkers, but at this office, interdepartmental cooperation and understanding is at the forefront of its mission, allowing for a better-run, well-"oiled" machine. It has been such a pleasure getting to know my coworkers and finding that my work is appreciated.
- I am just beginning and I do plan to enjoy this experience and hope to learn a lot.
- I did AmeriCorps in a different state last year and it was disorganized and we didn't receive adequate training or information. This year is completely different in the best way possible. My program is positive, open, and organized, which has already started my term off in a better way.
- My team is so much stronger this year than it was during my last AmeriCorps experience and it really does make a difference, so I'm glad I have a challenging experience that will allow me to learn and do better in the future.
- I couldn't be happier with the experience and the team that I have been so fortunate to work with!

## Appendix 1: Tallies of Ratings

**Tables 1-4: Indicate Your Growth in the Past Few Months (Members)**

| My teamwork skills | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|--------------------|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|                    | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No Growth          | 3      | 2    | 3     | 2     | 0   | 4            | 1  | 5   |
| A Bit              | 25     | 7    | 15    | 10    | 8   | 22           | 12 | 34  |
| A Lot              | 44     | 13   | 35    | 24    | 10  | 33           | 25 | 59  |
| Extraordinary      | 39     | 15   | 21    | 15    | 18  | 42           | 12 | 54  |
| ALL                | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

| My leadership skills | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|----------------------|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|                      | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No Growth            | 5      | 2    | 3     | 4     | 0   | 4            | 3  | 7   |
| A Bit                | 20     | 10   | 16    | 8     | 6   | 17           | 14 | 31  |
| A Lot                | 49     | 13   | 32    | 28    | 15  | 42           | 22 | 65  |
| Extraordinary        | 37     | 12   | 23    | 11    | 15  | 38           | 11 | 49  |
| ALL                  | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

| My problem-solving skills | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|---------------------------|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|                           | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No Growth                 | 3      | 1    | 2     | 1     | 1   | 3            | 1  | 4   |
| A Bit                     | 19     | 5    | 11    | 7     | 6   | 17           | 7  | 24  |
| A Lot                     | 51     | 14   | 39    | 17    | 12  | 40           | 28 | 69  |
| Extraordinary             | 38     | 17   | 22    | 16    | 17  | 41           | 14 | 55  |
| ALL                       | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

| My sense of accomplishment | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|----------------------------|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|                            | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No Growth                  | 2      | 3    | 2     | 3     | 0   | 1            | 4  | 5   |
| A Bit                      | 18     | 8    | 12    | 11    | 4   | 18           | 10 | 28  |
| A Lot                      | 41     | 10   | 33    | 9     | 10  | 31           | 20 | 52  |
| Extraordinary              | 50     | 16   | 27    | 18    | 22  | 51           | 16 | 67  |
| ALL                        | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

**Table 5: Which Have You Experienced in the Past Few Months? (Members)**

|   | GENDER      |             | AGE         |             |             | FROM ARIZONA |             | ALL          |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
|   | Female      | Male        | 17-25       | 26-49       | 50+         | Yes          | No          |              |
| Encountered situations new to me        | 89<br>(80%) | 31<br>(83%) | 64<br>(86%) | 34<br>(83%) | 23<br>(64%) | 80<br>(79%)  | 41<br>(82%) | 122<br>(80%) |
| Enhanced my set of skills               | 94<br>(84%) | 30<br>(81%) | 67<br>(91%) | 32<br>(78%) | 27<br>(75%) | 85<br>(84%)  | 41<br>(82%) | 127<br>(84%) |
| Enjoyed Myself                          | 99<br>(89%) | 34<br>(92%) | 72<br>(97%) | 36<br>(87%) | 27<br>(75%) | 89<br>(88%)  | 46<br>(92%) | 136<br>(89%) |
| Invented new/better way to do something | 62<br>(56%) | 23<br>(62%) | 52<br>(70%) | 23<br>(56%) | 12<br>(33%) | 52<br>(51%)  | 34<br>(68%) | 87<br>(57%)  |
| Made a difference in someone's life     | 81<br>(73%) | 25<br>(68%) | 54<br>(73%) | 26<br>(63%) | 28<br>(78%) | 78<br>(77%)  | 30<br>(60%) | 109<br>(72%) |
| Served as a role model                  | 80<br>(72%) | 26<br>(70%) | 59<br>(80%) | 27<br>(66%) | 22<br>(61%) | 71<br>(70%)  | 37<br>(74%) | 109<br>(72%) |
| ALL                                     | 111         | 37          | 74          | 41          | 36          | 101          | 50          | 152          |

**Table 6: Which Capture the Experiences of Those You Mentor? (Mentors)**

| EXPERIENCES OF THOSE MENTORED                   | No          | Yes         | ALL |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----|
| Encountered work situations new to him/her/them | 9<br>(17%)  | 44<br>(83%) | 53  |
| Enhanced his/her/their skill sets               | 6<br>(11%)  | 47<br>(89%) | 53  |
| Enjoyed himself/herself/themselves              | 7<br>(13%)  | 46<br>(87%) | 53  |
| Invented new/better way to do something         | 24<br>(45%) | 29<br>(55%) | 53  |
| Made a difference in other's lives              | 11<br>(21%) | 42<br>(79%) | 53  |
| Served as a role model(s)                       | 20<br>(38%) | 33<br>(62%) | 53  |

**Table 7: How Well Does Each of These Describe Those You Mentor? (Mentors)**

| DESCRIPTIONS OF THOSE MENTORED                        | No        | Somewhat  | Mostly      | Fully       | ALL |
|---|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----|
| Member(s) work independently with minimum supervision | 2<br>(4%) | 3<br>(5%) | 20<br>(38%) | 28<br>(53%) | 53  |
| Member(s) complete assignments in timely manner       | 1<br>(2%) | 1<br>(2%) | 23<br>(43%) | 28<br>(53%) | 53  |
| Member(s) exhibit high standards of teamwork          | 1<br>(2%) | 1<br>(2%) | 11<br>(21%) | 40<br>(75%) | 53  |
| Member(s) are definite assets to the host agency      | 1<br>(2%) | 1<br>(2%) | 8<br>(15%)  | 43<br>(81%) | 53  |

**Tables 8-16: Which of These Describe Your AmeriCorps Experience? (Members)**

| Assigned Activities<br>Appropriate to My<br>Skill Sets | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|--|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|  | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No   | 5      | 3    | 6     | 3     | 0   | 4            | 4  | 9   |
| Part   | 10     | 4    | 4     | 3     | 6   | 8            | 6  | 14  |
| Yes  | 96     | 32   | 64    | 35    | 30  | 89           | 40 | 129 |
| ALL  | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

| Assigned Activities<br>Appropriate to My<br>Interests | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|---|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|   | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No  | 4      | 2    | 3     | 1     | 2   | 4            | 2  | 6   |
| Part  | 17     | 4    | 10    | 7     | 5   | 13           | 9  | 22  |
| Yes   | 90     | 31   | 61    | 33    | 29  | 84           | 39 | 124 |
| ALL   | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

| Given Freedom to be<br>Inventive and Take<br>Initiative | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|---|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|   | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No  | 5      | 2    | 4     | 2     | 2   | 7            | 2  | 9   |
| Part  | 16     | 6    | 16    | 4     | 3   | 12           | 10 | 23  |
| Yes   | 90     | 29   | 54    | 35    | 31  | 82           | 38 | 120 |
| ALL   | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

| Have Better Under-<br>standing of How<br>Service Orgs. Work | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|---|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|   | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No  | 6      | 1    | 4     | 1     | 2   | 5            | 2  | 7   |
| Part  | 18     | 5    | 13    | 9     | 3   | 16           | 8  | 25  |
| Yes   | 87     | 31   | 57    | 31    | 31  | 80           | 40 | 120 |
| ALL   | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

| Made Significant<br>Contribution to My<br>Site | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|--|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|  | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No   | 5      | 2    | 3     | 3     | 1   | 3            | 4  | 7   |
| Part   | 27     | 9    | 20    | 12    | 5   | 23           | 14 | 38  |
| Yes  | 79     | 26   | 51    | 26    | 30  | 75           | 32 | 107 |
| ALL  | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |



| Learned A Lot About the Community or the Environment | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|--|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|  | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No   | 4      | 1    | 3     | 1     | 1   | 4            | 1  | 5   |
| Part   | 17     | 4    | 10    | 6     | 6   | 16           | 6  | 21  |
| Yes  | 90     | 32   | 61    | 34    | 29  | 81           | 43 | 126 |
| ALL  | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

| Made Significant Contribution to Community/ Environment | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|---|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|   | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No  | 6      | 3    | 4     | 3     | 3   | 5            | 5  | 10  |
| Part  | 25     | 13   | 22    | 11    | 6   | 23           | 17 | 40  |
| Yes   | 80     | 21   | 48    | 27    | 27  | 73           | 28 | 102 |
| ALL   | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

| Grown Professionally and Personally | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|-------------------------------------|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|                                     | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No                                  | 6      | 1    | 4     | 2     | 1   | 4            | 3  | 7   |
| Part                                | 12     | 6    | 6     | 8     | 5   | 12           | 8  | 25  |
| Yes                                 | 93     | 30   | 64    | 31    | 30  | 85           | 39 | 120 |
| ALL                                 | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

| Better Sense of What I Would Like to Do in the Future | GENDER |      | AGE   |       |     | FROM ARIZONA |    | ALL |
|---|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|----|-----|
|   | Female | Male | 17-25 | 26-49 | 50+ | Yes          | No |     |
| No  | 12     | 4    | 8     | 3     | 5   | 9            | 7  | 16  |
| Part  | 25     | 6    | 22    | 6     | 5   | 21           | 12 | 34  |
| Yes   | 74     | 27   | 44    | 32    | 26  | 71           | 31 | 102 |
| ALL   | 111    | 37   | 74    | 41    | 36  | 101          | 50 | 152 |

**Table 17: How Well Do These Describe Member Experiences? (Mentors)**

| EXPERIENCES OF THOSE MENTORED                             | No        | Part        | Yes         | ALL |
|---|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----|
| Members assigned work appropriate to skill levels         | 1<br>(2%) | 5<br>(9%)   | 47<br>(89%) | 53  |
| Members assigned work appropriate to interests            | 2<br>(4%) | 8<br>(15%)  | 43<br>(81%) | 53  |
| Members given freedom to be inventive and take initiative | 1<br>(2%) | 5<br>(9%)   | 47<br>(89%) | 53  |
| Members have grown professionally                         | 5<br>(9%) | 10<br>(19%) | 38<br>(72%) | 53  |

| <b>EXPERIENCES OF THOSE MENTORED</b>                                  | <b>No</b>  | <b>Part</b> | <b>Yes</b>  | <b>ALL</b> |
|---|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Members have grown personally   | 4<br>(8%)  | 16<br>(30%) | 33<br>(62%) | 53         |
| Members have better understanding of how service organizations work   | 5<br>(9%)  | 10<br>(19%) | 38<br>(72%) | 53         |
| Members have made a significant contribution to host site             | 5<br>(9%)  | 8<br>(15%)  | 40<br>(75%) | 53         |
| Members have made a significant contribution to community/environment | 4<br>(8%)  | 12<br>(22%) | 37<br>(70%) | 53         |
| Members have better sense of what they would like to do in the future | 8<br>(15%) | 21<br>(40%) | 24<br>(45%) | 53         |

## Appendix 2: Sample of Member Responses

**Describe in brief your last few months in AmeriCorps. What have you been working on? Who have you been working with? What difference have you made?**

- I have learned and been involved in a plethora of activities. I have retained my First Aid/CPR Adult/Child/Infant/ AED Instructor Training. I have worked with my AmeriCorps team members to learn how we help so many Service to Armed Forces members. I myself am recruiting volunteers daily who want to volunteer to help out our people in need. I have had a couple of great experiences the last two weeks. I was able to give a pre-deployment briefing for 600+ troops, including their families. I also coordinated volunteers for stocking stuffing and delivery of stocking, clothing, blankets, personal care products, socks, etc. Delivering them was a blast. They were delivered to hospitalized vets, along with homeless vets. I also enjoyed handing out the candy wreaths our volunteers made to the workers at the VA hospital. (American Red Cross)
- As the Outreach Coordinator, I launched my SMART program (Service Members Adjunct Reintegrative Tutoring) Program, continued to organize and schedule events with my fellow AmeriCorps Members and prepare for the influx that occurs throughout the holiday season. I continue to garner resources for clients, brief and perform outreach duties to the community as a whole, and make sure that the information on Service to Armed Forces (who we are, what our program is and how we accomplish the basic need of assisting all service members, veterans and their families). (American Red Cross)
- I developed my personal program Project Rx Defy. I've given a number of lectures at some of the different schools around Tucson and on the local air force base. I was put in charge of several volunteers (SAF volunteers, not AmeriCorps volunteers) and was responsible for scheduling lectures at different schools. I have also been a tutor with the SMART program. We had our first student earlier this week. It was extremely rewarding to begin working with students. (American Red Cross)
- I have been tasked with setting up the Employment Resource Center to help veterans, service members, and family members to gain employment skills and become employed. I know that I have made a huge difference in many lives. To date I have successfully placed 48 clients with jobs. I have been working a lot trying to find employers to hire our clients. We are looking to have jobs for the 600+ troops that are returning from Afghanistan and coming off the Border Mission (Operation Copper Cactus) I also participated in a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Activity where I provided two sessions of classes on Resume building, interviewing tips, and general information about the Employment Resource Center and how we can help. (American Red Cross)
- I am the Veterans Homeless Outreach, working with at-risk and homeless population of Tucson Arizona. There is currently over 2000+ homeless veterans, some with family members experiencing homelessness, and or near homelessness. I make myself available as well as advocate for the many needs that present themselves. As examples, I collect items of warm clothing and hygiene items. Through community collaborations with other agencies and faith base organization, we provide food boxes and hot meals for low income veteran and families. We assist in placing stranded veterans into emergency housing. I take part in obtaining toys for homeless children. I have been the Team Lead in identifying the 51 most medically vulnerable homeless individuals and responding directly to their needs. (American Red Cross)
- I cannot say how much this has meant to me to help other people. I am working on keeping seniors in their homes, by helping them with medical visits, other appointments, and shopping. Also stopping by for friendly visits. (Area Agency on Aging)

- I've done a lot of office work, which has been a disappointment. I have reviewed homebound senior clients for a state funded housekeeping and personal care program. I've done almost no direct care, again a disappointment. I take cancer patients (very few) to treatment, which is a blessing to me. I suggested a client get her prescriptions filled at Wal-Mart, saving her about \$500/month. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I work for an agency with limited funds serving homebound seniors. I do intakes and home assessments with new clients. I help train new volunteers at our orientations, notarize documents and fingerprint new candidates and then I process all of their paperwork, call references, make their ID badges, print out the certificates of their completion of the orientation and mail these items to each new volunteer. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I serve as a Wellness Coordinator for a senior center. I coordinate wellness events for the participants and encourage them to be active to improve their mental and physical health. They do improve and enjoy the activities. I personally have made a lot of friends. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I have been signing people up for the Wellness Program at a senior center, and recruiting agencies to offer topics of interest on health and wellness to seniors and disabled. I also have been participating in onsite activities, such as leading a crafts program. I have been able to assist center members in providing documentation to maintain health and food stamp benefits. I encouraged an individual on site to seek help for depression. This individual is smiling more, paying more attention to personal hygiene, and participating more in center activities! (Area Agency on Aging)
- My first few months in Americorps have been very intense and extraordinarily life changing. I have been learning about direct care procedures, disabilities, and communicating with those with limited communication abilities. What I love most so far though is having the opportunity to present the arts to the disabled community. I have done several lesson plans for and taught Ceramics classes. I've also learned how to implement different materials based on a participant's needs and capabilities—using tactile art with those who are visually impaired. I feel I have already made a huge impact on many lives. I absolutely love the AmeriCorps program I am part of, and it has opened my eyes to so much that I would otherwise never have experienced. I feel that by using what I have already learned, and what I will surely learn in the next few months, I will be able to make a more dramatic difference in the lives of others. (Arts for All)
- I work with adults in the day program daily as both an aide and a teacher. These adults have a variety of special needs so helping them ranges from verbal encouragement and instruction all the way to diaper changing and feeding. The difference I've made is hard to quantify; at the very least I've been an extra willing pair of hands for every activity. At the most, I've designed cooking courses that teach participants simple ways to prepare healthy and delicious foods at home, vitally important for those who are living in independent settings. (Arts for All)
- I've been serving with Arts for All, Inc, a nonprofit corporation that provides visual and performing arts based educational opportunities to a population consisting mainly of people (Pre-K through adults) with disabilities. I work with the adult group, teaching and assisting with drawing, painting, and ceramics classes. In terms of making a difference, I believe my contribution is centered on showing our participants different ways of expressing themselves and their ideas and assisting them in taking on challenges they might have otherwise have identified as beyond them. (Arts for All)
- In the last few months, I have been working as a tutor, making myself available for others, and making helping people my main priority. I've been working with students similar to myself and nothing compares to helping other students and friends succeed. (Central Arizona College)

- I have been tutoring high school students in English, reading, and writing. Myself and another member have helped one student decide to bring his grades up so that he can go to college. (Central Arizona College)
- All of my service hours have been spent at either at a high school or Central Arizona College. At the high school, I work in the class room with the students on their school work and extra assignments. I make a difference by allowing the teacher to have more time with some of their students and helping the students learn from someone who is closer to their age. (Central Arizona College)
- Throughout the last few months, I have been tutoring mostly at the Central Arizona College in mathematics. I have tutored various subjects such as Basic Math, Algebra, Geometry, Trig., and Calculus 1 and Calculus 2. I have worked with students from both the high school and college, and have been able to assist students understand the math material from their classes. (Central Arizona College)
- I have been working with several students in various subjects such as science, reading, English, public speaking, computers, history, etc. Many students will also ask me for advice and for help in searching for scholarships. (Central Arizona College)
- I am glad I joined the AmeriCorps because it has completely changed my life. I have been tutoring high school students who need help or struggle with math. I have helped students understand some math concepts and I am sure it has also helped in their math classes. I am there for the students when they need me. (Central Arizona College)
- I have worked with some wonderful people, project partners and program team alike, in some beautiful areas around the state. Rock work, brushing, and tread have been the main focus, but soon chain sawing will join the list. This job is easily the most rewarding I have ever had and I encourage anyone with the slightest interest in the environment and its overall preservation to support programs like this. (Coconino)
- I joined the AmeriCorps in the beginning of October and have a 6-month term. I plan on signing up for another term after this—I love it so much! I have been working with just wonderful people from all around the United States. Hopefully the difference I've made is noticeable to hikers in Arizona! Keeping the trail free of cacti is probably pretty helpful! (Coconino)
- I've been working with a trail crew mostly on hiking trail projects in Arizona. I'm on a crew of 8 people, all of whom are from different places. Tennessee, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Indiana—you name it! In the past month or two I've done mostly trail maintenance, such as brushing. We worked on one project where we basically recreated a trail because it was so grown over and confusing that it could not be hiked. We've also had "rock work" projects where we built rock staircases to fix gradient problems and make trails more hike-able and usable by horses. (Coconino)
- Projects have been varied ranging from brushing and maintaining foot trails to light rock work, thinning ponderosa stands and removing invasive species from watersheds. I feel that I have aided in the restoration and conservation of our nations wild lands, albeit my contribution is small in the big picture, I feel that the small contributions we all make as members of Americorps during projects such as these are essential. (Coconino)
- I have been serving as a crewmember on a trail crew. I have worked on a variety of projects, from rock and tread work that included building a large staircase, numerous check steps and water bars, to brushing back country trails and fuel thinning of private lands. I have developed many skills and have enjoyed getting to work all over the state of Arizona. (Coconino)
- Over the past months I have been working on conservation projects in National Forests or Wilderness areas. I have been working in a crew of eight members. We have made conservation impacts such as re-opening trails that were overgrown as well as clearing debris and trees from trails. (Coconino)

- On the past few spikes I have worked with the Coronado National Forest, rehabilitating a trail that a wild land fire had ravaged. Some of this was brushing, some was cutting tread, and yet other aspects included rock structures to re-enforce the trail. Another spike we went to the Mazatzal Mountains and brushed the trail to accommodate pack animals, and yet another project took us to Sedona where we worked on larger armoring projects as well as drains and retaining structures. The trails are more durable or sustainable, erosion has less of an impact on the trail, and people are more apt to stay on the trails. (Coconino)
- I've been working with foster and kinship families helping to provide clothing for their foster and biological children. This service seems to meet a need that hasn't been filled in the past. The parents and foster children are thrilled upon leaving Helen's Hope Chest. (Mesa UW)
- I recently started with Save the Family. They just started a drop-in child care program for parents who are in their housing program. Parents meet with their case manager, look for jobs, attend different classes, and engage in other activities. I watch their children (6 weeks to age 5) while the parents are busy. Occasionally a few school age children also drop by after school. (Mesa UW)
- Since October I have been working at a family shelter with their staff. The program director has been very ill and I feel I haven't had an opportunity to make a lasting impact. I have become acquainted with the residents in the program and because I am not permanent staff they feel they can come to me if they are troubled about anything. They are wonderful people and I am aware that we all are close to the same age. (Mesa UW)
- I have been working with the homeless women population. I have seen several of these women turn their lives around for the better. They have gotten employment and housing. Some have had their children returned to them. (Mesa UW)
- I have been working at Mesa United Way. The first task I was assigned was updating the online database. The second task I was assigned was organizing an online system for looking up resources. When I'm not doing computer things, I help put together items for campaigns (flyers, goods, etc.) or perform tasks my mentor asks of me. I also have been working with other women in the office and aiding them in their tasks when the need arises. (Mesa UW)
- The opportunity through AmeriCorps to find flexible part time employment is great! I have been working in the Property Management Dept. of Save The Family. It allows me to reach out to people in the community and forward resources needed. I am assisting the Director in getting the office reorganized and updating daily work schedules for maintenance. I am updating client letters and addresses. It is so nice to be appreciated! (Mesa UW)
- I assist with case managing client files. Clients save money and we match their savings 3:1 so they can pay for an education without a lot of debt. It is very rewarding to see long-term savings pay for educational assets such as purchasing tuition and books. (Mesa UW)
- I volunteer with Save the Family in their Property Development Department. I have developed and maintain various Excel spreadsheets for our properties and our tenants, listing all the steps in readying a property. (Mesa UW)
- I field calls and schedule pick-ups from people who want to donate large/heavy goods/furniture to Sunshine Acres, but they do not have the capability to get the items there on their own. I job share with another woman, and we have recently begun to train two other volunteers due in part to a huge increase in work load. Every hour of every day that I am at work I have the opportunity to make a difference. Both internally to the productivity level and effective utilization of resources of the donation pick-up department and externally as I interface all day with the local community, many of whom have very little knowledge about our program and its services. (Mesa UW)
- I have been working with the America Reads program. I help out the Kindergarten, First Grade and 4th Grade classrooms. I pull out students to work with them on reading, writing, mathematics and specific lessons that they are having trouble on. So far the difference I have made is that students

are more likely to open up and ask questions where before they were silent and would not ask for help. The class is fast paced and the teacher makes a big deal when they fall behind. (NAU)

- I have been working with Elementary School children. I have been mostly focusing on math and math concepts with kids in grades K-3rd. The kids are great, and a bucket load of fun! I feel I have helped improve the math skills for many of the struggling children. (NAU)
- I am one month into my Americorps service, and I have been working with the native plants in the greenhouse at the Arboretum. As it is the off-season, I have not been working with the public at all. I have kept the plants alive. (NAU)
- I recently started a new AmeriCorps term in the Civic Service Institute Office planning the national days of service events for AmeriCorps members and community members. My first project was for Make a Difference Day. We partnered with the St. Mary's Food Bank to bring teams of volunteers in and build food boxes that would then be distributed across Northern Arizona to hungry families in need. Everyone in the office has been such a great help and have given me so much support, brainstorming ideas, and constructive criticism, that it would not have been possible without them. Since October I have been planning and organizing events for MLK Day in January. Make A Difference Day was a huge success, and we're still waiting to see how MLK Day will turn out, but I am positive that it too will be wonderful! (NAU)
- I have been able to work on the Northern Arizona Native American Culture Trail project and the Hopi Artists' Consortium. Working with the tribal vendors and artisans from the neighboring tribes, as well as the culture-based entrepreneurs that are attempting to attract the tourism revenue. I am currently in process of changing the website to add two tribal maps and additional resources to the biographies of each participant. I have drafted and implemented the Artists' Consortium for the Hopi Tribe which will be starting to collect merchandise with its first store front opening in January, and five additional locations will be following in the next three months. (NAU)
- I have been working with local high school students to develop service-learning projects. I have led students through brainstorming, planning, and implementing phases of their projects, which typically focus on less fortunate populations of our local community. The students have organized a hunger and homelessness awareness event, conducted a winter clothing donation drive, and expanded their views of the community by attending several community service projects. These include helping at the local soup kitchen, homeless shelter, and conducting trash pick-ups. (NAU)
- The last few months have been very busy. I have been in training sessions with the Volunteer Center of So. AZ as a "community service leader" for Tucson. I have been working with youth for local high schools on a service-learning project that was presented on MLK Day with the inclusion of a city-wide swear-in for Tucson AmeriCorps Members from several local programs, at the same time, connecting with 16 area nonprofit organizations meeting community needs. (Pima Community College)
- Since AmeriCorps training, I have been at Ocotillo Family Literacy engaged in adult education. However I have also been engaged in all aspects of Family Literacy. The most enjoyable experiences have been helping students one on one. The difference that I have made is most noticeable when I work with one student at a time. In these instances, I have tried to help them with their children's homework. (Pima Community College)
- The last few months in AmeriCorps have been an amazing learning experience to me. I have been volunteering at the Learning Center at PCC Desert Vista Campus. I have been tutoring students who have questions on writing assignments. I also have been helping with the GED department within the learning center by assisting students who have trouble answering or solving a problem. I have most far had an impact toward students who were or are having trouble understanding writing assignments. I know they have been doing well because they come to me to say thank you for helping get an A on an assignment. (Pima Community College)

- I have been assisting and supporting our Family Literacy teachers. I have been working with students and have helped them better understand the material on which they are working so they can complete their assignments for class. (Pima Community College)
- I have been working with Adult Education students (GED, beginning ELLA, and self-paced students). I feel I have made a difference particularly with a couple of older female students who didn't think they could learn how to subtract improper fractions. (Pima Community College)
- I have been working at El Pueblo Learning Center as a math tutor and have been tutoring a couple of people in understanding math problems, proportions, and integers and fractions. I have made a lot of progress in helping the students and also myself in understanding more math and hope to continue to do so. (Pima Community College)
- In the last two months I just started into the second term with AmeriCorps working to support AZ Project WET. Never a quiet day with the variety of exciting projects: coordinating 4th grade water festivals; giving presentations to the 2,000 middle school students about the riparian areas and the preserve; scheduling fieldtrips to The Conservancy's preserves for the 2,000 middle school students involved with AZ Project WET's Water Investigations Program, and recruiting volunteers. I have thoroughly enjoyed the work experience. This is an amazing organization - everyone works so hard and with a positive attitude in making a difference for our environment and the people that depend on it. (The Nature Conservancy)
- The last few months consist of GPS mapping invasive plants and GIS processing. GIS has been a program that I have wanted to know how to work; however, it seemed like a difficult process. Now that I have a better understanding, I hope to continue to develop and improve my skills with it. (The Nature Conservancy)
- I have been working at Muleshoe Ranch and 3 Links Farm with my co-workers on a number of projects. I have helped build rock dams for stream restoration. I have cleared several trails for visitors to enjoy. I have also cleared roads and firebreaks to make places more accessible, as well as a number of smaller projects on the preserves. (The Nature Conservancy)
- Being an AmeriCorps stewardship assistant, as I have discovered in the past three months, is a job rife with experiences full of significance and learning opportunities—learning how not to amputate limbs while using a chainsaw, for example, or learning why, despite the sweaty late summer heat of southern Arizona, it's still best to wear long pants and sleeves when battling through the prickly, itchy grasses and thorny trees that vegetate the area. I have been working on a few preserves in Arizona--primarily Muleshoe Ranch and 3 Links Farm. We've done a variety of tasks, including clearing overgrown trails and roads, basic property maintenance, stream restoration, dam building, fence reclamation, and assorted small tasks. I work with two intrepid coworkers. We've made significant differences in the ability to navigate these two properties by foot and truck by clearing the overgrown roads and trails. In manually, piece by piece, fetching down old fencing from where it was abandoned on a high hill years ago, we've been able to put this fencing to use on other projects. Our stream restoration also made a section of stream at Muleshoe navigable for the small native fish struggling upstream. The work is physically challenging and not always fun in itself, but in three months of working in what many would call "the middle of nowhere," I feel exponentially more alive in my body and mind. I see parts of the world, am experiencing a side of life and nature that most people never will. This job brings with it a life and a world that is limitless, beautiful, and simple. I will miss every place we're fortunate enough to live and work at, but I can't wait to see what the rest of the preserves and rest of the AmeriCorps year will bring. (The Nature Conservancy)
- Over the past few months, I have been working on a new program at the Food Bank to increase consumption and purchase of local, fresh food in preschools. I have been working with the Food



Bank and newly formed cooperatives of day care providers. So far, we are in the organizing and training stage. (UA Wildcats)

- I have been working at the Tucson Village Farm, an urban farm whose target audience is kids. School groups come to the farm for field trips, and we take them through a series of educational and interactive stations where they learn about growing food and about nutrition. They get to help us plant our garden, and they also get to sample some of the foods that other children have planted before them. I have assisted with this program as well as general farm chores and am currently working on creating a new station based on archaeology and the foods that ancient peoples in the Tucson area ate, in an effort to share some traditional foods of the desert with kids. We work mostly with low-income schools, some after-school programs who visit our farm as well as a young men's rehab group. I have contributed to making children enthusiastic about good, nutritional food and appreciative of the effort it requires to grow one's own food. (UA Wildcats)
- Starting in October, I began my quarter time position as an AmeriCorps Water Educator. Through collaboration with the University of Arizona Water Resource Research Center, four other Water Educators and myself (in addition to our supervisor) have been teaching lessons related to water to an audience of 3rd graders in the Tucson area. Half of our lessons are taught in the 3rd grade classrooms and focus specifically on groundwater. The lessons are designed to teach the students about groundwater and its importance to the citizens of Tucson. The other half of our lessons are taught out at the Sweetwater Wetlands. These lessons focus on the water cycle, watersheds, water conservation, and wetlands (specifically, the process of turning wastewater into reclaimed water by utilizing the unique addition of the Sweetwater Wetlands). All the lessons we present are very interactive with the students, which both encourage excitement in the students and leads to better learning. During these past few months of teaching, I have seen hundreds of energetic 3rd graders that were genuinely excited to learn. Each 3rd grade class has its own personality, but every class shares a few common roots: eagerness to learn, interest in the material presented (and how it's presented), and undeniable progress exhibited as the students shout in unison, "They clean the poop water!" (in response to the question, "What is one important thing that the wetlands do?"). I am proud to say that the lessons I have taught have given 3rd graders throughout Tucson insight into the importance of water both for Tucson and its inhabitants, and for the world. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been giving in-class presentations on groundwater for third graders and teaching four different water lessons on third grade field trips to the Tucson Water Sweetwater Wetlands. I have been working with three other Americorps members. The lessons are very interactive- third graders are an awesome mix of curious and excited and love to participate. I have been passionately teaching water lessons to the fullest extent and engaging students for lifelong lessons on water conservation and knowledge. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been working as a liaison between administrative staff and tutors at various branches on the Pima County Library system. I have administered a survey to students. I have also tutored some students of various ages in subjects such as math and writing. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been working in Elfrida, AZ with the Elfrida Citizens Alliance as a volunteer. I have been doing research on what services are lacking in the Sulphur Springs Valley which Elfrida is a part of. I have attended the focus group meetings and set up the meetings. So far we have had eight meetings that have covered topics such as housing, economic development, education/job training and community services. I have acquired a lot of information about the area in which I live and what services are lacking. Through these meetings different organizations have been able to connect and begin working together. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been with Americorps for over a year now. I have been working on increasing volunteer capacity at the non-profit, educational materials for the community and developing a culture-based

curriculum for our ESL classes. I can only speak for the difference I have made in my own life, becoming a better educator, more culturally competent and fulfilling the goals and objectives of the organization. (UA Wildcats)

- I have been serving with the Iskashitaa Refugee Harvesting Network. It has been a learning experience. The position is very informal, as is the work; there are pros and cons to this. I have been coordinating volunteers and refugees, harvesting, and cooking. I have helped feed the Tucson refugee community. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been working with youth (ages 5 to 19) at Pima County 4-H on retention and increasing the numbers of youth in the non-animal projects like cooking, sewing and arts and crafts and other project areas. I have also been tasked to increase 4-H Leaders participation to offer workshops for adults and youth, like an International cooking series, Dutch-oven cooking, and a 4-H Genealogy project. (UA Wildcats)
- I have done many small projects in the past few months. I have made a brochure on child safety car seats for patients or individuals that need extra information when they come to El Rio Community Health Center. I have also had the opportunity to research and learn many of the topics that are available to volunteers to be taught to the public. I have been able to research and rewrite modules that have not been updated for many years. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been assigned two main tasks at the International Rescue Committee, the first being the position of the Youth Ambassador Coordinator. This past summer, the youth ambassadors (Tucson high school students) met at the IRC for an overview of refugee resettlement and our programs, and it is my role to keep them engaged in the refugee community. I have been planning small community service projects with them, culminating in a car wash fundraiser that helped raise money for the drought in the Horn of Africa. My other main role is working on social media for the IRC. I have researched and identified best practices for NGOs in social media, and used that knowledge to compile a presentation for office staff about how to best manage social media. I have also used those practices to update various social media outlets such as Facebook. (UA Wildcats)
- During my last couple weeks with the International Rescue Committee, I have been conducting vocational training with newly-arrived refugee clients seeking employment. I've taught clients about budgeting and finances and have learned how to advocate for clients unable to make their monthly travel loan payments due to unemployment. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been working with the International Rescue Committee, a resettlement agency. Specifically, I have been working with the Medical Division helping coordinate the medical care of our clients. I have been working on a Medical Resource Guide to give to our critical clients to help them understand the US healthcare system and assist them in eventually being able to coordinate their care on their own. (UA Wildcats)
- During my time as the sewing and crafts coordinator for the Iskashitaa Refugee Harvesting Network I have completed many tasks, some of which are ongoing. Recently, I contacted refugees, translators and volunteers to help with our monthly redistribution day. During this event we compile donated craft items from all of our storage areas and lay them out in one area for the refugees to come and take home. I have also signed us up for different craft fairs and coordinated volunteers and refugees (who made the items) to help set up and break down for the event, as well as sell the craft products. I have also made several contacts with key people in order to sell products in retail stores, get donations from landscapers for palm fronds needed to make the baskets, as well as possible volunteer teachers for an advanced sewing class. Currently we only have one basic sewing class once a week, and I am trying to expand this department, not only for more classes, but for more locations of classrooms. I would like to offer other classes including knitting and crocheting, and work with other apartment complexes where the refugees live to gain

access to more public spaces to offer these classes in different locations. I have also been organizing our storage areas—a very daunting task indeed but has to be done to keep things running smoothly. I feel as though I have made a difference in the office by organizing and keeping things straight. I also feel as though the current staff is excited to have one person taking over this position since many people were involved in it before I was hired, which often resulted in confusion because of lack of communication between those involved. By working on trying to expand the craft classes I feel as though I will be helping the refugees not only to express their creativity, but also to gain a skill set which can help them in America. (UA Wildcats)

- In my work at Tucson Village Farm I have the opportunity to not only perform daily farm maintenance tasks such as planting, harvesting, irrigation repair and installation, but also to work with school-age children, educating them about agriculture, nutrition, and the environment. We also host student volunteer groups a few times a week and host a bi-weekly 4-H meeting. Myself and our three other AmeriCorps members have hosted over eight different elementary and middle schools in the past month, with the number of students who have visited our farm totaling over 600. The variety of tasks that I get to work on is huge and I am lucky to work at a place where literally every day I am able to work on something different. In the fall season I participated in establishing an Edible Orchard, facilitating the fall Harvest Festival, and beginning a weekly U-Pick program that combines community outreach with agricultural education. Our fall harvest was mostly given directly back to kids—our pumpkin harvest was taken home by Rio Vista elementary school, and we serve a farm-fresh snack to every group that comes to the farm. Our most recent one was homemade pesto from our basil harvest. The most tangible difference that I feel that I have made is making kids aware of natural processes and more specifically where their food comes from. Many kids have no idea that the vegetables that they see in the store don't begin their lives in a sealed plastic bag, but rather need to be planted, grown and harvested. There have been many times when kids come to the farm that they for the first time see vegetables growing. (UA Wildcats)
- Over the past few months I have been working primarily with refugees and asylees on various immigration applications, such as green card, family reunification, and citizenship. I have also been training a new Immigration Services Intern at the IRC and supervising his work. Furthermore, I have been involved in revising the Civics and Citizenship Class at the IRC in order to improve the quality of the class. I have helped over twenty refugees/asylees over the past few months with a vast number of immigration issues and needs. I am so happy to report that the first person I helped through the IRC will be picking up her daughter from the airport within the next couple of weeks. She applied for family reunification months ago to bring her five year old daughter here from a refugee camp in Africa, and I am in large part responsible for her being issued a visa. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been working with others to develop workshops that the leaders want me to teach at their 4-H club meetings. I also have helped with fundraising and attended trainings. I enjoy working with the kids but sometimes forget that they have busy lives and other commitments than 4-H. (UA Wildcats)
- I've initiated and facilitated an after-school program called Growing Roots which connect elementary and middle school kids to their natural environment through games, activities, discussions, etc. I've helped the 4-H Green Lot with their expanded area design through community service collaboration with such organizations as National Outdoor Leadership School, Southwest Conservation Corps and Tucson Youth Leadership day. I've also worked with a local neighbor group and helped with their community beautification project. (UA Wildcats)

- I have been working with the Income Strategies and Community Development areas of United Way helping plan for the Income Tax season coming up in early 2012. I also created a newsletter template for C-CORE, a program that matches at-risk teenagers with local mentors. (UA Wildcats)
- I am a Public Health Intern for the Literacy for Life Coalition on the Literacy Zone Project in South Tucson. My role is to make health assessments, collaborate with ongoing public health efforts, and to connect the project with public health partners and community efforts. It has been challenging to make initial connections with public health efforts in South Tucson because the Literacy Zone project has not previously been working in the area of health literacy. Another major challenge has been learning and understanding what the role and function of health literacy is in a broader literacy project. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been working with students at an elementary school. They help with all of the projects we have, mostly maintenance; and the adults do the initial building. This past semester we have completed building two chicken coops (one in the backyard of one of the student's family, four rainwater harvesting cisterns, worked on projects as part of Ecology Stewards, regularly watered plants and picked up trash in front landscaping and desert biome, and kept up the garden even throughout the cold winter. I feel that I have made an enormous impact as an Americorps member. Yes, it is about the projects, but most of all it is about what the children are getting out the projects; and I believe that the benefits of the projects have clearly made a difference in the kids' lives. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been working with the school counselor and two other interns at an elementary school. We work with all of the students at the school. We have had a big cistern installation project, and we have been working on a chicken coop and maintaining our garden. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been participating in water education events. I have been participating in food demonstration to introduce new meals or tips to the community. I have been teaching canning and preserving food. I have been working on food-related events within the community—we always have large turnouts. (UA Wildcats)
- I have been involved in an after-school program for kids aged from 6 to 13 called Safe, Smart, and Healthy. Each day we have a "snack time" in which we share a meal and discuss the nutritional value. We have reading/homework time as well as some activity that has to do with being active, or some educational activity. Everything that happens seems to be a learning experience for these kids-- even walking through the parking lot to the van! (UA Wildcats)
- I have helped add new elements to the farm and done regular maintenance on it, participated in the agricultural literacy program for kids, and assisted with facilitating groups on the 4-H High Ropes Course. I have been working with people of all ages on both the farm and the ropes course. I have been creative in my problem solving on the farm, increasing efficiency of existing systems and creating new ones where needed. I have helped many kids learn about the importance of making healthy food choices, the origins of some of the food they eat, and how they can make choices that lead to wellness and a healthy, sustainable lifestyle. On the ropes course, I have helped people build confidence in themselves, develop trust with their peers and team mates, learn to communicate clearly, recognize their own strengths and push through self-imposed personal limitations. (UA Wildcats)
- For the last month my main goal has been to research and report on our Greater Tucson Youth Leadership Program. I have read through all of the printed material and took notes to begin compiling my report. I have also started to plan activities and recruit for the Youth Advisory Council. I have been recruiting for the pre-planned projects. I have started researching ideas for holiday projects that I will be planning on my own. I have been working alone so far. I have a greater understanding of my position and feel prepared to start doing projects. (Volunteer Center)

- For the past month I have worked with youth and my co-workers to redesign and replant our youth garden at the Farm. That has given youth the chance to experience building a garden and learn more about the stages of growing food. I have visited numerous area schools, facilitating discussions relating to food, and building relationships for future involvement. I have tabled two events, one providing vegetable starts to home gardeners and the other, educating young children about farming and agriculture. I have also participated in the beginning stages of a new coalition designed to provide youth with career and training opportunities. I also helped plant an orchard at the Farm that will provide a much need supply of fresh fruit to the Community Food Bank's markets. (Volunteer Center)
- Over the last month, I have been working within already established programs at Girl Scouts, and starting new programs. I like the mix of creating my own curriculum, and working with existing group dynamics. Existing programs I worked at include: a few elementary schools around metro Tucson, Pima County Juvenile Corrections (a partnership with YWCA), and KARE. I set up programs with Amity Circle Tree Ranch addiction treatment center, Catholic Social Service refugee services, and TMM Children's Home. I can see that the girls I work with really admire me and respect what I have to say. I think I have been a positive role model in their lives, and give them dignity as people. (Volunteer Center)
- I work with schools both at the farm and in the classroom. I've participated in several community events including: a literary event at the main library and a health fair at the Arizona State Museum. I've shared a lot of home gardening resources with youth and their parents, added lessons to our farm curriculum, wrote an article for the Community Food Bank about youth outreach at the farm, and have been working with AmeriCorps NCCC serving at the farm. (Volunteer Center)
- I have been completing a community needs assessment. I have spoken to locals and community partners to get an idea of what health issues are most concerning. This will allow me to create projects that are meaningful and impactful. I have also been planning episodic projects for January and February. (Volunteer Center)
- I volunteered with a middle learning about native plants and their value and also how to plant things. I also assisted in building a humming bird garden with Tucson Audubon Society. I've facilitated discussions with advisories to help them plan their own service/ service-learning projects. I've facilitated discussions, set up presenters for advisories and our all-school meeting, assisted with projects and events on campus, helped clubs with ideas for fundraisers and service projects, done design work for some events, built a relationship with our community garden site, and built and sustained community partnerships for specific teachers and the community at large. (Volunteer Center)
- I have been working on recruitment for our spring and summer expeditions. We have had interested meetings and brainstorming sessions. I have also been working with our No Girl Left Inside initiative. Going to local schools and working with girls on leadership and outdoor activities. Helping the Tough Cookies Cycling Team. Providing programs that focus on gardening, science, and the world around us. (Volunteer Center)
- I have been working with Tucson Refugee Ministries youth events. In December, I participated in a community event in a refugee and low-income neighborhood. TRM partnered with youth volunteers to host food, crafts, and games for families. I have started a program series with refugee girls through Catholic Social Services. Girls of all ages have participated and the series has been very successful. I teach a class called Tech Girls at Pima County Juvenile Detention. I am planning to incorporate self-reflection exercises and goal imagining into animation curriculum. (Volunteer Center)
- The two biggest projects I have been working on are teaching Relationship Smarts courses and helping develop and start youth coalitions. I am working on setting up meetings, and service

learning for these youth, but also working on recruiting youth. Teaching the youth about healthy relationships and working to prevent teen pregnancy has hopefully made a difference. (Volunteer Center)

- I have worked with school and youth volunteer groups at the Marana Heritage Farm, to grow food and help them understand the importance of knowing their food, eating right, and participating in their food system. I have also helped with general farm maintenance, field plans, and harvest. I support the production of produce for our Farmers Markets and have done outreach for the farm and our Youth Farm Project. (Volunteer Center)
- I have primarily been orchestrating all technical aspects of the events put on at Prescott Center for the Arts. In addition to set/lighting/sound being done for shows and concerts, I have been organizing interactive marketing campaigns that not only promote the shows at the PCA, but also foster partnerships between local business and non-profit organizations (including some other AmeriCorps-sponsored sites). I have also produced/am planning to produce original works that benefit specific local non-profit organizations. (Yavapai)
- My past few months in AmeriCorps have been great! I have been planning and implementing program for the Willow Springs Girl Scout camp in Prescott, AZ. Girls who've attended my programs have gotten the chance to spend the night in the great outdoors with their family, gain new outdoor skills in: archery, fire building, out-door cooking, and hiking. They've gotten the chance to grow in this all-female, supportive environment. Further, I have gotten the chance to improve my skills in all of these areas as well as work with phenomenally dedicated women who want the best future possible for the women of Arizona. (Yavapai)
- My past few months at AmeriCorps have been great! I've gotten the chance to work with some incredibly and inspiring children and adults. So far I have received training in: leadership development, the various capacities of reaching girls through the Girl Scout program, how to diversify and include others in our program, and a lot of technical training to make my job more efficient. With this training I have been able to plan and implement leadership and family-oriented programs as well as teach various outdoor skills to a myriad of age levels. I have taken an active part in meetings and supported my sister staff members, communicated and made connections with extended council staff members, networked with Girl Scout volunteers and camp counselors, and completely directed and execute an amazing weekend family camp that served over 70 partakers and staff. My service with AmeriCorps has helped the Willow Springs Program Center build the capacity to serve more girls and create more program that aligns with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. (Yavapai)
- I have been working with the Girl Scouts Arizona Cactus Pine Council at the Willow Springs Program Center. I have helped to build capacity, made connections with fellow GS staff, moving forward on the food plan and setting high goals for the GS. I support fellow staff and GS Leaders, taking an active role in meetings and communicating to fellow camp staff. (Yavapai)

**What was your most enjoyable or most challenging experience? Please share it as a short story:**

- I helped four veterans secure employment with two companies we had previously established a relationship with, that are veteran-friendly. This allows them to be self sufficient and a foundation on which to build a better life. (American Red Cross)
- One of my most favorite experiences was "Wreaths across America" event, in which we participated along with some 200 other people in laying wreaths against every stone in the Southern Arizona Veteran's Memorial Cemetery. This is an event that is close to my heart, since my grandparents and many other family members are laid to rest there, but also an opportunity to make sure no one was forgotten this holiday season. (American Red Cross)
- My most enjoyable experience so far was co-teaching Basic First Aid and CPR schools to Operation Jr. Hero's. This event was held for children whose parents are deployed. We showed them what a "Tent City" on a base was like. (American Red Cross)
- Contacting different schools has been challenging. This has involved finding contacts by calling everyone, writing emails, making more phone calls, collecting schedules, then setting up appointments. It is extremely time consuming. But getting to go to the schools, giving the lectures, and finally seeing the products of my hard work was extremely rewarding. (American Red Cross)
- My most challenging thing has been to build an employment resource center for veterans from the ground up. I have found the partners, designed the layout, written the policies and procedures, and laid the ground work for outreach of clients and employers. All of the hard work and effort really pay off every time I hear from a client who tells me they have become employed. (American Red Cross)
- My most enjoyable experiences have been attending the move-ins of veterans into their housing, fully furnished. Many of these individuals have not had a home to call their own for 10+ years. (American Red Cross)
- My most enjoyable moment was helping to start a layette programs with the Women Health clinic and the volunteer service program at the Veteran hospital. The Veterans hospital had 100 women veterans that gave birth last year. I am sorry that it took so long to start one. (American Red Cross)
- I have been working several cases in the emergency messaging system. We have been able to successfully close many of the cases. Still want to focus on them until they are all current. (American Red Cross)
- One of the worst experiences I have had recently was singing the National Anthem. I have done this before on several occasions, but this time was awful. I do not know what happened, but I started singing in the wrong key and I got super nervous after that. Although there are some individuals who commented on my beautiful voice, I just can't help but think that was the worst performance I have ever given in my entire life. To top it off, Sandra Day O'Connor was in attendance and had to witness my most horrific event. (American Red Cross)
- My most enjoyable experience over the last few weeks was hearing that a family we had been working with has had good luck finding jobs. This couple moved from Illinois after the husband returned from deployment and became employed with the Heroes to Hardhats program. After the program moved him to Arizona and after the birth of their first son, he was laid off. We have been working with the family to get help with diapers and most importantly to find jobs. The mother is now employed at a local casino (one of our partners) and the father has three interviews set up and has very good feelings about them. (American Red Cross)

- During the past holiday season, AmeriCorps joined in at the Southern Arizona Veterans Affairs Health Center for preparations and distribution of stuffing stocking, and meeting with the men and woman of the hospital center. There was a retired military officer with severe health issues, which had precluded having him from joining in the visit and receive a stocking. When I heard he was having a hard time with all that was going on around him, I suggested we sing an old Christmas favorite holiday song (we wish you a merry..., we wish you a merry..., and a happy New Year). He was visibly moved and showed his delight. An individual who has served his country proud and true, to give back a little delight. A smile on his face was my holiday present.
- I have 8 clients who need transportation to doctors, labs, shopping as well as company to alleviate loneliness. One of my clients is only 31 years old. She has had a stroke and is also becoming eligible for a kidney transplant. Her sense of humor and positive attitude give me the reason to be a volunteer and make me aware of my own shortcomings. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I am a Wellness Coordinator at a senior center in Tempe, AZ. I have been working to get our seniors healthier and more mobile. The strides they have made because of this program are amazing. Not only are they healthier, take less medication, and more mobile, but they are reaching a level of self confidence that makes me feel so good about what I am doing. A woman who was house-bound because her husband insisted she stay at home, got back her confidence. She went away with friends over Labor Day for four days and was so ecstatic about it. Her husband made it through and is looking at her differently. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I've enjoyed brightening our homebound seniors' days with a simple visit. Everyone has a story to tell, and I love to listen to their stories. I get far more from them than I give. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I work as an outreach coordinator. I have been convincing men of color to volunteer to work with seniors in our community. As a result, a 96-year old African American woman was matched with a man of color in learning how to use the computer. This relationship has developed into one where both were honored at a program tea recently. (Area Agency on Aging)
- A recent highlight was seeing one of my blind clients waiting for me to take her out for the day. She would not ever leave her home before in the past. (Area Agency on Aging)
- The best aspect of my job is to go to a new client's home and be the first person who interacts with them. I let them know how important they are and that we are going to try to provide them with all of the services that they need. I explain, in detail, just what we can do and how the services will be performed. I answer their questions and let them know that if they need further assistance, they are welcome to contact me at the office. I think I help give them some peace of mind. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I have one client who has had Parkinson's disease for over two years. She is very difficult to work with because she wants to continue to live as if she is healthy. I think I have helped her to sort at least part of her life out. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I have been working at a senior center with mostly Hispanic seniors. We have the Silver Sneakers exercise program at our center and have helped seniors with planning their meals. My most challenging experience is to get men interested in exercising I have two men that are active but one likes to play cards so it is a challenge to get him away from his card game for 45 minutes, but I have managed to do it every morning when he comes in. I tell him not to forget he has to finish his card game by 9am so he can exercise with us, which he now does. (Area Agency on Aging)
- Most challenging for me has been trying to schedule wellness events at our senior center so as not to coincide with other activities and to get seniors to realize the importance of attending. Most enjoyable has been hearing about all the success stories and witnessing the building of community in the process of participating. (Area Agency on Aging)



- I've been helping senior citizens and disabled clients with transportation to where they need to go (hospital, doctors' appointments, grocery store, and shopping for some of them). It has made most of my clients feel better about where they are in life today, and knowing that someone is there to help them and care about them. One of my most enjoyable experiences was taking one of my older clients to his church, because he hadn't been in over two years. This is a church that he helped design years ago. The look on his face was priceless. (Area Agency on Aging)
- A woman with signs of Parkinson's disease noted a session in crochet I was providing. She had enjoyed crocheting in the past, but said she couldn't do it very well anymore. I gave her some yarn and a large crochet hook. She still had problems and felt discouraged. I helped her undo her work up to that point and switched her to an even larger hook. She left the session with a new project in hand. She will be bringing her completed potholder to the next session. She just needed a smaller project and tools adapted to her disability! (Area Agency on Aging)
- My favorite experience so far was teaching ceramics classes. I worked very hard on the lesson plans in an attempt to make them interesting and something the participants had not yet done, but were capable of doing. I also made sure my lesson plans included the AZ Art Standards. Teaching these first two classes was a blast. The project was to assist participants in making a terra cotta sun and using different methods of building to achieve the look of facial features, rays, etc. What impressed me most in these classes was the way every participant created something so unique and reflective of their personalities. They were all given the same assignment, but all have such different ways of perceiving things, that every piece was incredible and unlike any around it. Seeing this changed the way I think about many things in life: perception, my own artwork, overcoming obstacles, and most importantly, it reminded me how fantastically different we ALL are and how wonderful that is. (Arts for All)
- I enjoy meeting all of the consumers and learning about them. It was hard to read them books some times; it just hurts your heart knowing what people have to go through on a day to day basis like that. I know this will be a challenge but I am more than up for it. (Arts for All)
- My most enjoyable experience has been working with our Laser Art Technique (LAT) artists as an LAT tracker. A tracker is the person who applies paint on the canvas at the direction of the LAT artist's laser pointer dot. This requires a certain degree of mutual trust, and I've only just gotten to the point where that trust is allowing me to work successfully. It is very gratifying to be able to help someone express their visual ideas on canvas by striving to act as nothing more than a fill-in for their arms and hands. (Arts for All)
- My most enjoyable experience was when I was helping a student study for her vocabulary test; she was struggling at first but we kept at it. After a going over it several times, she was grasping each and every vocabulary word though she was still unsure of passing the test. She took the test and aced it! That to me was worth more than anything. (Central Arizona College)
- I am currently going to school to be a school teacher. i want to teach history at a high school level and one day work my way up to be a college professor. The most enjoyable experience i had was working in the class room and actually being allowed to help teach some of the assignments. It gave me a wonderful hands-on experience and an idea of what to expect when I finally reach my goal of becoming a teacher and helping students of my own. (Central Arizona College)
- As a math tutor, the most enjoyable experience is the happiness on the student's face when they finally understand a little bit of algebra and or geometry. The most challenging experience is that I didn't remember some of the beginning math and had to ask for help. (Central Arizona College)
- I enjoy working with each and every student because either the student or I learn something new. The most enjoyable experience today was giving advice to a student who was not in school. Based on the information I gave him, he decided to enroll in college and reach out for his goals. I

felt I had something to do with him making this decision. It felt good knowing that I was able to help in this way. (Central Arizona College)

- My most enjoying experience is waking up and knowing I am going to make a difference today. I also enjoy working and interacting with the high school students. The most challenging experience is having forgotten a math concept and having no idea of how to do a math question. In this instance, I have to relearn before I can help the student. (Central Arizona College)
- We had to hike three miles up a mountain, shortly before sundown, after a long car ride. The project partner said it would take an hour and a half- max. It turned into a fairly grueling hike of three hours, most of which was spent lit by headlamp. But we crushed that spike and the hike is now a badge of honor. There were nearly five more miles to be hiked the next morning. (Coconino)
- My most enjoyable moment is being with my crew. They are the most wonderful people I've ever had the pleasure of meeting. I love working outdoors with them! (Coconino)
- One of my most challenging experiences so far was our second project. We worked backcountry and weren't sure what to expect. We hiked seven miles, but discovered that the hardest part of that hike was the first 3 miles. We ended up starting the hike early the first day after driving so we found ourselves hiking three miles in the dark, gaining 2,000 feet in elevation with 90 lb packs. We didn't have a clear idea of where or when we would be stopping so at times it was discouraging, but I can definitely say that I felt like bronze at the end of it. (Coconino)
- As of now I would say that my time spent in the Huachuca mountains was both my most challenging and enjoyable experience, it was both a psychologically and physically demanding spike as we spent eight days back country at high elevation in poor weather conditions throughout our spike. (Coconino)
- My most enjoyable experience has been a project that let me develop my skills as a sawyer under the guidance of my crew leaders. I felt the experiencing was immensely valuable for my desire to continue working with conservation corps and my overall roundedness as a person. (Coconino)
- The most enjoyable part of my corps experience is being able to travel around the state. I have been able to see many parts of Arizona that I would not have seen otherwise. It is special to be able to share these beautiful places with others. (Coconino)
- My most challenging experience was after having loaded my pack down with tools and extra food, then going to put it on, realizing that it was a little loose so I tightened the straps. As I tighten my straps my left shoulder strap rips off my pack. At over an eighty pound pack I was lucky I hadn't listened to my coworkers and gone with an external frame, for this allowed me to fix it as good as it was going to get before we took our four mile backcountry hike of almost purely switchbacks. There were some times during that hike that really tested my physical, emotional, and psychological dedication to the project but honestly it was a great way to start my spike because after that it rained for three days not straight, but our camp was at 9000 ft. so we were in a cloud for half the week. There was nothing like waking up above the clouds and observing them heat up and rise past us as the sun rose in the sky. Having dedicated to a service contract, I feel that a lot of this work is putting yourself in situations you never would before and accomplishing a common goal with your crew for the greater good to impact the cultures surrounding the area you work in. (Coconino)
- I recently worked with a young teenager that moved from Michigan. He had special needs and we worked together to get him the clothing that satisfied him together with some stimulating items (e.g., toys) to help him bridge the gap from moving into a new environment. He was lonely and the items provided to him seemed to make that transfer easier on him. (Mesa UW)

- My most enjoyable experience comes when the children don't want to go home. They are having a lot of fun playing with the different toys that we offer. Sometimes, they start to cry, and then the parents have to coax them to leave. Sometimes, I can offer a small treat, like cookies and that helps them. (Mesa UW)
- A resident entered the shelter feeling she was entitled to be taken care of, "that was the shelter's job." We discussed that and she acknowledged that she needed to take personal responsibility, while we could assist her in making that step. She subsequently found a job and progressed out of the program. (Mesa UW)
- The most rewarding or enjoyable event would be seeing some of the women we serve sign lease agreements and begin moving into their new apartments, The most challenging would be seeing a few of the women leave and get housing and return within a few months with problems. (Mesa UW)
- I work at Helen's Hope Chest, providing clothes and other goods to families in need. It's challenging coming up with enough outfits for each kid because we simply don't have it. We are getting more and more kids. I love how I can pass the joy onto others to give. My daughter coaches the Golden Grannies for the Phoenix Suns and all of them have donated for the kids. Gift cards, clothes, jewelry all new! My neighbors are always dropping gifts off and friends from all over the country are sending me clothes and money. Yesterday I had 5 generations come in. They really needed the help and had tears in their eyes when they left Helen's. The feeling I get helping those people is worth everything! (Mesa UW)
- A fellow met with me seeking assistance for his electric bill. During this meeting we discussed his income and expenses. I asked him if he smoked and he answered yes. I also asked him if he drank. Together we figured out that he was spending \$360 each month on smoking and drinking. I brought it to his attention that if he cut back or gave up these habits that he would have enough money to pay his bills. (Mesa UW)
- The most enjoyable experience I've had thus far was working with Helen's Hope Chest for their Christmas Gift Program. I helped foster parents choose presents for the children in their care, which was a very gratifying experience. These parents were so grateful and happy that, even after eight hours of work, I wanted to do more. (Mesa UW)
- I organize the pick-up of large objects for our donation center. It has been very challenging to maintain the same level of customer service with the recent tremendous hike in the number of calls for pick-ups. The increase in the volume of calls affects not only the amount of time it takes to follow-up with each call but it also impacts the quality of scheduling/utilization of departmental resources. Although, this workload has been stressful, it has also given me the opportunity to work extra hours, which I needed, and some long work days, which have been good for building up stamina for which I am grateful. (Mesa UW)
- My most enjoyable experience was doing an advising appointment all by myself to help a student and her father complete the FAFSA. Seeing how much she wants to attend school and how much her father supports her made me see how helpful I can be in helping people achieve their dreams. It made me so happy and it makes me really look forward to this upcoming year that I am know will hold endless opportunities to help others. (NAU)
- I really enjoy coming to the school and seeing the students smile when they see me! A lot of students request to work with me and they don't see it as tutoring, they see it as special time. I also really enjoy seeing the students finally grasping academic concepts that before were difficult for them. (NAU)
- The most enjoyable experience I have noticed is how well the young children learn. It is great to see how far they have gone in their work. Last week, for example, one child that I have been

working with every week counted all the way up to 20, which is not something she has been able to do very well. (NAU)

- I helped organize Make A Difference Day. We sent teams of volunteers into St. Mary's Food Bank to fill food boxes that would be distributed to hungry families across Northern Arizona. It was so successful that the food bank ran out of supplies for volunteers to fill the food boxes with. I followed up the service project with a survey for our volunteers to take. The feedback I received was 100% positive. Everyone had a wonderful experience, felt they made a difference, and said they would do it again in the future. It was a great way to start my term! (NAU)
- I have been working with graduate and undergraduate students at NAU to organize and facilitate connections between them and the community in food-related projects. It's been skill-building, relationship-making, and bridging the university and community divide. I've been working to connect them to the local non-profit organization, Foodlink. (NAU)
- I had the pleasure of attending a Hopi tribal gathering where I was able to make contact with at least 100 vendors. As I was introducing our program, I had talked with a vendor that knew influential people from my home community. Not only was this an example of how small the world is, but how you never know what stories you will come up with by talking to vendors about their personal experiences. (NAU)
- My most challenging experience has been multitasking office work duties. This has taught me the importance of priorities. (NAU)
- My most enjoyable and challenging experiences lie in encouraging club members to think more critically about the service work they are doing. I am happy to see some members come to a realization about why they think it is important to conduct service, and what they want their role to be within it. Other times, I am challenged when club members make judgments about different groups of people that are based in prejudice. Either way, each tendency sparks discussion that can help everyone come to new realizations. (NAU)
- I have been lucky enough to have many wonderful experiences at the Coconino Center for the Arts.. Working with the Flagstaff youth that often comes into our gallery has been extremely rewarding. We recently had our "Night Visions" exhibition; an art show that combines art with the sciences. I developed a student program and had children discussing the night sky, and then lying on their back staring up at creative art project displayed from the ceiling. (NAU)
- The most enjoyable experience has been working with the high school students on the youth service-learning projects. Not only did it allow me to see that we have dedicated, committed, motivated and passionate youth, it gives me hope for the future when many only expect doom and gloom. (Pima Community College)
- The most challenging experience was when an instructor handed me a group of five beginning students who did not speak any English. This was very challenging for me but I was able to help them understand pronouns and difficult words that needed translation. (Pima Community College)
- The most challenging experience for me has been taking the RAISE students from invented writing and spelling to actual letter and word recognition. These students have previously been in special classes as much younger students. However, after high school age these students have not been worked with language on this level at all!! Consequently it's very difficult to now encourage this as a daily need and function. (Pima Community College)
- There was a memorable experience when I had the opportunity to recruit and co-train fifteen 7th and 8th graders to teach a water festival (four water conservation education lessons) to local 4th graders. This group is also going to teach a group of 4th graders the same lessons in another school district as well. A lot of great things happened in this experience. (The Nature Conservancy)

- My favorite experience was when we were given the task of building a Zuni Bowl in a degraded stream. Our goal was to develop a rock dam that would help cut the head waters, so that when it rains and floods the native fish will be able to move upstream. We got to design and develop the project ourselves how we wanted it to be. (The Nature Conservancy)
- My two intrepid coworkers and I were embarking on day four of hauling rolled-up bales of rusted wire fencing from the top of a high, steep hill down to the headquarters of Muleshoe Preserve. The rolls of wire were awkward, large, heavy, endlessly numerous, and had to be carried individually down and over hills to be loaded into our truck. We were on our first trek of the day to the top of the hill, sore from doing the same trek dozens of times for the past three days and hiking fast up the now-familiar relentless and steep switchbacks to warm up in the crisp and clean December morning air. I had my iPod playing "Eye of the Tiger" while I imagined starring in my very own '80's movie montage as I hiked and hauled my way toward perfect physical condition, Rocky Balboa-style, and my coworker behind me was jamming out to Michael Jackson. A dip of motion caught my eye, and I looked up quickly—a glimpse of motion on a hike at Muleshoe is always worth investigating. I had seen a massive gopher snake, foraging coatis, dainty white-tailed deer, glorious swooping hawks, javelinas glaring with their small, suspicious eyes—all starting with a simple glimpse of motion. There was a northern harrier swooping smoothly between "our" hill and the one next to it, no more than 50 meters uphill from us. I slowed my steps and watched as he dipped and soared in small, low circles. We got within 20 meters when the raptor dove and disappeared into the dry, buff-colored grass and thorny shrubs. The sparrows that constantly flitted about the hills seemed unperturbed, and chirped and darted unconcernedly around where the harrier had disappeared. We stopped and watched, waiting for the harrier to rise up, perhaps clutching a meal in its talons. Moments later, it shot up out of the grass with a few powerful strokes of its wings, empty-clawed but magnificent, and we watched it soar away, exchanging looks of bright-eyed wonder. It was a simple thing, but it already marked the day as exceptional at 9:00am, and reminded us of the rare and special place we were in. This is typical of our days—they go from ordinary to extraordinary quickly and frequently, with constant reminders of how lucky we are to be where we are. Working in sweeping natural areas brings with it breathless encounters with beauty and wildness, and my eyes and thoughts have been slowly retrained through simple events like this one to stay alert, open, and curious—and perhaps most importantly, appreciative. The detachment and stress cultivated by city life has no place here. (The Nature Conservancy)
- We recently had a refugee group come to the Tucson Village Farm, and one of the teenagers, a refugee from the Congo was thrilled that we had okra growing on the farm. We found out from the leader of the organization that he was basically the head of his household, taking care of younger siblings and his mother, who was a victim of torture in the Congo. He asked if he could harvest some of the okra for his mother because it's one of her favorite foods. When we encouraged him to gather as much as he wanted, he beamed. His somber face was suddenly glowing. So far, this has been the most touching and enjoyable moment I have experienced aside from my general joy from working for such a wonderful organization. (UA Wildcats)
- I have traveled to elementary schools accompanied by one other Water Educator to teach 3rd graders about groundwater using a groundwater flow model. My fellow AmeriCorps volunteer and I introduce ourselves, present the material, and then have a short discussion with the students about the field trip they will take to the Sweetwater Wetlands. My friend and I make sure to mention that we will be at the wetlands to teach the students a few more things about water. When the time comes, my friend and I are out at the wetlands waiting for the bus to arrive with those same 3rd graders. Each time this happens, I am both honored and pleased when I hear little shouts as the students file off the bus such as, "Hello Chelsea! Remember me?!" When the

students remember my name, I know that I have made an impression on them, and each time the students are very polite while I present them with more material at the wetlands. (UA Wildcats)

- My most enjoyable experience so far occurred after a presentation on groundwater in a 3rd grade class. We had briefly discussed environmental careers at the end of the group activities, and one particular comment from a student has stuck with me since. She met my eyes with enthusiasm and said, "I want to be just like you when I grow up." (UA Wildcats)
- Classroom management is a challenging daily task. It feels like a great success when we teach a 50-minute lesson and the kids are so interested and engaged that they are asking questions until the last second. We have been in some difficult environments such as teaching with our groundwater models while a lunch or recess has been going on around the presentation area. It is a challenge yet quite satisfying to keep kids focused and learning during these times. (UA Wildcats)
- My most enjoyable moment was being able to work with students as a tutor. It's very rewarding to work with students one-on-one. I'm proud to be part of a program that offers students of all ages extra help outside of the school system. (UA Wildcats)
- I have really enjoyed working with the adults who attend our ESL classes and learning about their experiences in their native countries and their literacy levels. As a result of this shared learning, our classes have become a space of much culture exchange. The ESL teachers have also grown in their inter-cultural and intra-cultural competency, questioning their own values, beliefs and ethnocentrism. (UA Wildcats)
- The most enjoyable moment for me so far was our Strengthening Families graduation ceremony. Everyone was able to see and hear the difference that it made in the lives of the participants. It was great to be able to listen to the testimonies and know that I was involved in it. (UA Wildcats)
- On the last trip to Buckelew Farm, before the frost and the cows got to the fields of leftover pumpkins, Liberata joined me for a harvest. With her fantastic smile and our severe language barrier we headed out in the fruit truck towards Three Points attempting to make exchanges about ourselves, where we were from, and what we would be doing for the day. These conversations continued as we arrived at the farm. As we harvested the hefty pumpkins our communications fluctuated between verbal and what I now like to call the universal language: charades. As we acted and made grunting noises followed by a single word, we both were able to learn new words in each other's language, Liberata's being Swahili. On the adjacent field to ours, a farmer turned on a bird cannon, a machine which runs on propane that is used to make a very loud bang to keep birds from eating a crop. Well, this constant noise of explosion launched Liberata into a charade I didn't really see coming. As one can imagine, sounds of this nature meant horrific things when they were heard in her home country, the Democratic Republic of Congo. Liberata formed an air machine gun in her arms and began to fire away. As she fired away her new charade made air-machine-gun, I made a bird with my hands. My bird began to nibble at one of the pumpkins. Liberata fired her air-machine-gun and my bird immediately flew away. ""Ahhhhhhhh"" she gasped as the big smile returned and once again stretched across her face. We had done it. We had both won this game of charades. She understood there was no danger to the loud blast of the bird cannon, and I was able to peek into her past as well as be glad she was here, safely harvesting pumpkins. (UA Wildcats)
- My most enjoyable experience was creating a child safety car seat brochure. It allowed me to make my own judgment when it comes to what information is important and how it's presented to the public in a way that is easy to read and understand. I was also able to pick and choose pictures that would help enhance the brochure overall and make it interesting to read and use for everyone. (UA Wildcats)

- The most enjoyable and challenging experience was engaging high school students for a car wash to raise funds in response to a drought in the Horn of Africa. It took a lot of effort to mobilize so many high school students and find an appropriate venue, but after facing several obstacles we were able to produce a successful car wash. The students were very happy to see that their efforts were helping to make a difference in the international community and that they were contributing to the International Rescue Committee's mission. (UA Wildcats)
- All of my experiences at the International Rescue Committee have been very enjoyable and rewarding. I am enjoying the challenge of finding employment for clients with little to no work experience and limited English. The most challenging experience thus far was helping a newly-arrived Nepalese client complete an on-line application for a local restaurant. This particular restaurant required the applicant to complete an 80-question personality test. The client speaks English fairly well but reading, understanding and responding to the questions was rather challenging for him. I worked with him for two hours on this particular application and, with the help of Google Translate, he was able to complete it. We are waiting and hoping his hard work will pay off! (UA Wildcats)
- My most enjoyable experiences have been transporting IRC clients to medical appointments. There is so much to learn from refugees coming from all areas of the world, and I am glad I get the opportunity for them to share their experiences with me. (UA Wildcats)
- The most enjoyable experience I have had so far was interacting with the refugees during redistribution. They were so excited to come and sort through all of our beautiful fabrics to take home. It was challenging yet entertaining trying to communicate with one of our master sewers, since he speaks very little English. I would sort through and find what I thought to be ideal fabrics for him to make things with and would hand them to him and say, "You like?" or "You want?" And he would take a corner of the fabric and examine it closely, then either nod and smile and take it or shake his head politely and say, no, no. He ended up staying until the end of redistribution and helped us fold all of the fabrics and put them away which was so helpful. He is one of those people you can look at and know they have been through a lot but have such a beautiful soul. (UA Wildcats)
- My most enjoyable experience so far was the day that the after-school group Word Journeys came to the farm. They are a mentor-mentee group that pairs high school kids with younger kids, some of whom are recently displaced refugees, and encourages literacy. The group was probably the most enthusiastic group that came through the farm—they were excited to be there, excited about gardening and sustainability. I spoke at length with a few of the older kids and was so impressed with their intelligence and enthusiasm. Watching them work with their younger mentee planting our soup-pot garden, I realized how kind hearted and caring they were, and seemingly unconcerned with the more frivolous aspects of high school, at least for the afternoon. They took home with them most of the tail-end of our summer crops, and we just couldn't give them enough. Kids excited about vegetables! One of the older kids, who had been recently displaced from the Congo, was extra excited about the okra since he had grown it back home in the Congo. The entire afternoon really reinforced for me why we do what we do at the farm—we do it for kids like the Word Journeys kids, who have a deep appreciation for what goes on at the farm and a consciousness of the environment, but also for the kids who don't yet have that, or haven't had the opportunity to get it. (UA Wildcats)
- My most enjoyable experiences at Tucson Village Farm are also my most challenging. Some of our largest groups at the farm consist of over 100 kids, so to handle all of these youngsters we split them up into 6 different groups. Reciting the same lesson back-to-back 6 times in a row can be exhausting and challenging. However, these are also my favorite moments at the farm. You can feel the energy in those large groups, and the smiling faces and enthusiasm of the kids is

priceless. They keep me enthusiastic and motivated to keep on talking and the better I am teaching, the more they get involved and excited and it is so wonderful to see a kid get excited about vegetables! (UA Wildcats)

- I was helping with a LEAP planning camp, teaching the counselors how to use some of the technology. One counselor approached me after the training and asked for extra help with Photoshop software. She was shocked how easy the program was. A week later she contacted me and thanked me again, she had used the Photoshop skills I helped her acquire and got an A on an Art project she needed to make a poster for. (UA Wildcats)
- My most challenging experience thus far was a case I was assigned last month. One of our client's cases was denied on behalf of suspicion of fraudulence and so forth. I had to meet with him to determine whether or not he was being truthful, and write a rebuttal letter on behalf of his case. I also had to gain new evidence to submit with the letter. It was very difficult because I had to put a lot of detail into the rebuttal letter and determine what sort of evidence would be beneficial to his case. When it was all said and done, the decision was complete denial of his case. I was very upset by this decision because I believe my client is telling the truth and I know how much this means to him. Also, I have never been faced with this before, which made it really difficult for me to give him the bad news. Fortunately we are working on a motion to reconsider the decision. (UA Wildcats)
- I've really enjoyed working with a diverse community of teens, kids and local ITE staff. I've also enjoyed the aspect of working outside and collaborating with various non profits in Tucson. Furthermore, I've enjoyed getting to know and work for a unique organization (Ironwood Tree Experience) which directly impacts the community. (UA Wildcats)
- After having worked at United Way for about two months, I still recall my first day working. I entered the offices prepared to get straight to work, and my coworkers surprised me with instant conversations and lunch. They expressed how they believed it was important to get to know the new employees before my work could be completed, and it was true! Befriending each other in the beginning has really assisted me in building trust and gaining respect. (UA Wildcats)
- Making home visits with promotoras to refugees has been both wonderful and heart breaking. Seeing a glimpse into another culture and the warmth that happens between the client and promotora is a wonderful thing. The refugees, at first, don't have a great deal of means to live by, and it's difficult to see the level of poverty that exists in the U.S. (UA Wildcats)
- The most enjoyable experience has been working with students in small groups. This gives me an opportunity to interact with and get to know students on a more meaningful level. One great day was the day of a chicken coop tour that our elementary school was a part of, the same day we were also installing cisterns. We had a large group of volunteers mixing cement and preparing the cisterns while the elementary school students were leading tours. Hearing bits of their school gardening tours was a highlight, all of the students were proud of their school and were serving as great ambassadors. (UA Wildcats)
- The most enjoyable was the food demonstration we had on cooking a turkey in four different ways. It was a great experience to see the excitement from everyone that was introduced to new ways of preparing the turkey on Thanksgiving. Also, the samples were delicious. (UA Wildcats)
- The other day, a colleague and I took the kids to the library where we looked up books using the library search computers, went and found them using the Dewey system, and read together in a circle. It was wonderful, and I felt like the kids learned a lot and had a good time, and asked if we were coming back the next week. (UA Wildcats)
- My most challenging experiences have been knowing what to say when one of the kids tell you very dark things about their families or events in their lives that kids should not be having to deal



with. That has been my greatest reward: helping these kids by giving them advice and comfort through tragic situations that they are confronted with. (UA Wildcats)

- While assisting in facilitating a group on the 4-H High Ropes Course, a participant said, "I don't think I'll be able to climb that ladder. I'm pretty weak and I'm scared of heights!" I gave the participant some words of encouragement, and shared that big things can be done if we focus on the little steps needed to get there, one at a time. The participant took a long time coming to the decision to give the ladder a try and climb, and needed much support and guidance with every step. After reaching the top and riding down a zip line while screaming and laughing, the participant said, "I'm so glad I decided to challenge myself. I couldn't have done it without your support, though! I feel great!" (UA Wildcats)
- So far my most enjoyable experiences have been attending the Volunteer Management Training Series. I have learned a lot about recruitment and leading volunteers by doing activities and listening to stories from people at different organizations. These experiences have not only helped me come up with ideas and feel more prepared for the projects I will be leading, but they have also made me realize that I want to study how people learn and experiential learning techniques and ideas. (Volunteer Center)
- Planting an orchard with 70-plus volunteers has been one of my most rewarding experiences so far. Families and individuals planted over 40 fruit trees in an hour, a huge feat! Afterward, many stayed on to help plant potatoes for the market and others expressed surprise that certain trees grew in Arizona and left the farm to buy a fruit tree to plant at their homes the same day. That to me was a huge success! (Volunteer Center)
- My most challenging experience this month was also my most enjoyable. I have been assigned almost a half-acre to produce for all of our youth programs and add to the produce going to our Farmer's Markets. Planning and implementing the design of crops has taken the majority of my efforts, but I have been able to incorporate a variety of learning experiences with youth who visit the farm and have successfully planted the crops (with help) for this fall season! (Volunteer Center)
- My most enjoyable and challenging experience was during the freshman trip to the Grand Canyon. For me, it was my chance to get to know the students and the staff at the high school where I am assigned. Most of the students had never been camping so that was a challenge by itself. Also, to gain the trust of the students was a huge aspect of the trip. (Volunteer Center)
- This last month I have been working on planning holiday time projects, leading pre-planned service projects, preparing for our first Youth Advisory Council visioning meeting, and preliminary planning for our leadership program. I was also a facilitator for a group at the Tucson Youth Leadership Retreat where we visited Tucson Children's Museum and Armory Park Senior Center. The group of youth I was facilitating came up with their own idea for a service project, and I have been following up with them. I do have new teammates, but so far I have been working on my own for the most part. I completed a first draft of the Greater Tucson Youth Leadership Program report, which will be useful for Volunteer Southern Arizona as we plan this year and for the future. (Volunteer Center)
- My most enjoyable moment so far was at the Arizona Summit on Volunteerism and Service-Learning. Most of the workshops I went to were really great, and I took away valuable information. The service-learning information session taught me so much, and it was great to be in a room with people who are pioneering this movement across Arizona. The personal mission statement workshop was like a dream come true, because I read *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and never took the time to write my mission statement, so it was great to have a specified time to do it. One of the best parts though was when some of the AmeriCorps members and I sat up talking in our hotel room at night, which was a great bonding experience. (Volunteer Center)

- My coworker and I showed the documentary "Supersize Me" to teenage girls that we work with. After learning the premise of the film, the girls were genuinely interested in seeing the results. Normally, nothing but their phone will hold their attention, so I was excited to hear the girls asking questions and comparing eating habits. When we finished the film, we had carrots and celery with peanut butter as a snack. The girls were happy to try it and were surprised that they liked it. I felt rewarded by their conversations as they talked about ways to make good eating choices. (Volunteer Center)
- I really enjoyed representing the farm at a community health fair where I gave out lots of information and free seed. I met lots of parents and children who were very excited to learn that they could garden, in Tucson, in their own backyards! I made some great contacts and it felt wonderful to share resources with so many people. (Volunteer Center)
- My most enjoyable experience has been planning my first youth volunteer project. I wanted to impact nutrition and had the idea of planting vegetables in a community garden. I contacted a community partner who was very enthusiastic and helpful towards my ideas. (Volunteer Center)
- My most challenging experience this month was adjusting to being on my own. With my last term, I was a part of a team, and therefore I was able to work with my teammates frequently. Now, I'm on my own and I'm still discovering the pro's and con's of it. (Volunteer Center)
- In November, our Tough Cookies Cycling Team completed 42.8 miles at the Tour de Tucson. It was challenging because in practice the girls had only completed 30 miles but they were prepared to fight for the rest. It was challenging to be positive for the girls and to help them through the experience, but to also keep myself positive to complete the race. It was so enjoyable because I can say that I was in the Tour, but that I also completed it with a team of four girls ages 10 and 11. (Volunteer Center)
- Several teenage girls that I work with regularly are not taught visual arts education in their schools. They had been begging me for weeks to paint! I gathered the supplies we needed and printed out some examples of works created by female artists. We talked about what the examples communicate, color theory, and ideas that the girls wanted to paint, then they got to work! It was so fun to see them enjoying themselves, and I got to put my art degree to work. (Volunteer Center)
- I think the most challenging experience is trying to come up with activities youth want to get involved with and that is not repetitive. A lot of the youth told me that they don't want to do the normal thing they do every day. In saying that, I'm trying to figure out a way to get more youth wanting to volunteer as well as continue throughout the year. (Volunteer Center)
- The most enjoyable experiences that I have had so far involve my AmeriCorps team. I love when we get together for our monthly professional development meetings because I love to be in that type of learning environment and participate in activities with my peers. I have also really enjoyed getting to know my Youth Volunteer Corps team members and collaborating on ideas for recruiting youth. We have come up with some new and exciting ideas that we will hopefully be able to try out in the coming months. (Volunteer Center)
- One of my most enjoyable experiences has been meeting with the teens who are interested in the youth coalition and hearing their ideas and thoughts. It has been really neat to meet with teens, extremely motivated and passionate for making a difference. All of these teens have plans for their lives and they want to work to help their peers become motivated and give them a goal for their future. I enjoy talking with freshmen, who know what they want to do after high school, know what they need to do to get there and what to avoid. One of the teens said that so many of her peers don't have a plan or a goal for their future and without a goal they have no motivation to make

smart choices and she wants to help them find a goal and provide opportunities to make smart choices. (Volunteer Center)

- My most challenging experience thus far was the first week at my host site. The two teachers and my supervisor at the high school were very welcoming, but most of the students did not acknowledge me. This was challenging because I am there to help them, but most of them have trust issues. Once they saw that I could explain their Algebra assignment better, or help them find the deeper meaning to their English Literature story, they began to trust me and see that I was only there to help them. It took a couple of weeks, but they're beginning to feel comfortable coming to me right away when they don't understand something. (Volunteer Center)
- My most enjoyable experience last month was participating in the Tucson High health fair. Over 500 students attended the fair and I engaged 100 youth in educational activities and conversations relating to organic farming, healthy eating choices, growing food in southern Arizona and how plants grow from seed to harvest. The students shared their amazement and enthusiasm with me and I learned that not only did several of them garden at home or in their community, but that many more were interested in volunteering their time with the Community Food Bank. (Volunteer Center)
- This month I helped a fellow member with her refugee programming for the Girl Scouts. I was very surprised how the girls positively reacted to us and the program we had planned. It was great to see their smiling faces every time we got together. Even in just a few meetings, I felt like I make a connection with a few of the girls and helped them to enjoy what Girl Scouts could potentially be like for them. (Volunteer Center)
- My most enjoyable experience was helping to revamp the entire composting and soil fertility system at Las Milpitas Farm. I worked with a group of 11 NCCC AmeriCorps volunteers, who learned about the importance of soil fertility to sustainable agriculture and recycling, while we worked. We were able to create a system that will significantly improve the local community's capacity to support community gardeners and produce more local food. (Volunteer Center)
- As part of a crossover of my AmeriCorps and theatrical life, I was able to co-produce the "Dirty Laundry Female Playwrights Festival," which featured nine original plays written by female playwrights from Prescott and Los Angeles. The event was designed to not only produce these works, but as a benefit production to help the Prescott Area Women's Shelter. In the end, we had nine new plays that were exciting and so well-done, and we were able to donate over \$2000 to PAWS along with a huge volume of diapers, clothes and other necessary items. Through the experience, confidence and skills gained via "Dirty Laundry," I have already started preparation for a new play festival this coming year, which is designed to benefit the Coalition for Compassion and Justice Thrift Shop here in Prescott. (Yavapai)
- One weekend a group of over 75 girls and adult volunteers came out to enjoy the snowy offerings of Willow Springs Girl Scout Program Center. The most exciting moment for the girls this weekend was playing in inches upon inches of snow. The most exciting moment for the staff was seeing the look upon faces of girls who'd never experienced snow before. Many were mesmerized and most were soaking wet within minutes. There were snow people everywhere, break out snow fights, snow angels, and a lot of need for hot chocolate. (Yavapai)
- In the middle of November, the Willow Springs Program Center hosted an encampment of over 60 girls and their adult volunteers to spend time learning in the great outdoors. Due to a staff cancelation at the last minute, I was given the opportunity to take a small group of girls out to play some Woods Games. The night before, as troops of girls were arriving, it snowed approximately 6-8 inches. Many of the girls who were attending this event were from the Phoenix area and had never seen snow in their lifetime. It was thrilling to witness their wonder at the natural phenomenon of snow. They played for hours making snow people, having breakout snowball fights, and

catching snowflakes on their outstretched tongues. Further I had brought along food coloring that we mixed with water in squirt bottles so the girls had the opportunity to “paint” in the snow. They drew pictures, colored clothing onto their snow people, and generally enjoyed mixing the colors on the fresh powder. Their wonder, delight, and smiles brightened my spirit for weeks and continues to remind me that the work I do with youth is worthy and needed. (Yavapai)

- A girl came up to camp for an Encampment. She is about 12 years old and is from Phoenix. She has never seen the snow. She came up to camp with her troop doing activities and such around camp, we also got 8-10 inches of snow this weekend and she spent her time out in the snow. Now when you picture her playing in the snow for the first time ever I bet you guess making snow angels, throwing snowballs, catching snow in your mouth...etc. She spent her time crawling in the snow, rolling in it, somersaulting, getting buried in it by other girls. She embodied the snow, there was no question in my mind, after spending an hour walking with their group about half a mile some of which goes downhill (and she rolled down the whole hill mind you) that she was having the best day of her life and her life had changed. (Yavapai)

**If you could design the ideal volunteer experience, what changes would you make with regard to your current AmeriCorps assignment?**

- I WOULD NOT MAKE ANY CHANGES. I AM VERY HAPPY WITH MY AMERICORPS ASSIGNMENT. I COULD NOT HAVE ASKED FOR A BETTER ORGANIZATION AND POSITION. (Note: this was the most common response across all the programs. It appears here once in caps as counterpoint for the more critical comments that follow.)
- I just wish we could help everyone more than we are actually able to. (American Red Cross)
- I would like to help each mentee personally and make sure they are able to get all the help they need. I would like to have all the mentors go through orientation right when they are interested in being a mentor because it seems like the longer they have to wait they begin to lose interest. (American Red Cross)
- It would be nice to not be so displaced from my peers. I do get the feeling sometimes that I am the little lost sheep, and so many things my peers do, do not apply to me. On that same note, none of my peers do what I do. It is just difficult not having the support of my supervisor or peers on a day-to-day basis. But at the same time, it has also taught me how to problem solve and come up with ideas on my own. (American Red Cross)
- That full time be a few hours less than 1700 for adult volunteers. In order to fulfill the obligation, it leaves little time for other things that are just as important as volunteerism, like family, school or personal obligations. Sometimes, giving so much time can be stressful and oppressive, making for unpleasant experiences. (American Red Cross)
- I would appreciate more communication with the Americorps supervisory team. Have all the senior centers in our program on the same page with the same rules and regulations. More face time with supervisors. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I would implement the program with definite commitments from people prior to the start of the program. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I would provide new volunteers with clear guidelines on responsibilities, proper training on documentation required, and make sure consistent followup is provided to assure quality of documentation. These steps would help insure a more informed volunteer, thus a more self assured and enthusiastic member of the corps. (Area Agency on Aging)

- I have landed in the ideal volunteer experience. It is definitely not the program for everyone, as it is extremely intense and can be quite stressful, but it is all worth it to me. Despite now having more responsibility than ever before, I have never been happier. The program I am now part of is such a beautiful thing. The only changes I would make, if possible, would be to reduce the stress and workload placed on brand new volunteers. I sort of feel as though I was thrown into the job slightly unprepared and immediately expected to know how to deal with very difficult situations. Combined with the heavy amounts of data collection and paperwork that AmeriCorps requires of us, topped off with very strict management, this has led to me having days where I feel I might burst. Despite this, I am very happy with my volunteer experience, and all of these challenges are helping me to grow in many ways. (Arts for All)
- I would eliminate the majority of the paperwork in favor of more hands-on time with participants. We already do a great deal of data recording for the state, the county and the city because so many of our participants receive aid from these other entities that there is a never-ending stream of mandatory paper to be filled out and filed. (Arts for All)
- Sometimes i felt that i needed better communication with other member and my leader. However i think that the program is already amazing and i would not change anything about it. (Central Arizona College)
- I would encourage more communication and allow more opportunities for the AmeriCorps team members to do some team work. (Central Arizona College)
- I would make it so that the volunteers could meet a month to discuss their experiences. (Central Arizona College)
- I think CREC is an amazing organization—definitely one of the best conservation corps as far as leadership and general experience development goes. It's hard to find something that I would improve but I would say that adding more in-field opportunities and general leadership building to the program would benefit everybody. I received WFA and CPR training at CREC. That's still way beyond what many corps offer, but I think CREC could go even beyond that to make the program a leadership enrichment program. (Coconino)
- More immersion in the state one resides in. More volunteer events etc. (Coconino)
- I would require volunteers to be currently enrolled in college or have completed a degree. Maturity level greatly varies between individuals that have further pursued education after high school versus individuals that have not. (Coconino)
- I would invest more time making balanced crews and electing appropriate leaders in the lower levels, i.e. supervisors and ACLs. I mean sometimes you can't see the real way people are in an interview. (Coconino)
- I wish there was better training provided to new volunteers. (Mesa UW)
- I would prefer to have an opportunity to learn something about how things work, not be handed a list of rules to be followed, as has happened. (Mesa UW)
- I think we need more volunteers so things are not so chaotic. I feel we may overwhelm them because there is so much for them to do. (Mesa UW)
- Have the volunteer be trained by an experienced person. Ask them what they prefer to do. Talk to them and try to expand their circle. (Mesa UW)
- Ensure that there is complete information given the volunteers when a task is assigned. (Mesa UW)
- I would let the AmeriCorps volunteer create her own job. I wouldn't change much about mine except that I would like to work more flexible hours. (NAU)
- Sometimes the teachers don't have much for me to do, and it makes me feel like I'm wasting my time being there. Other than that, the environment is great and I absolutely love it. (NAU)

- My current AmeriCorps assignment is the best I've had so far. I really cannot think of anything I could ask to improve it. Everyone has been wonderful by being supportive and willing to help. I feel like I am part of a family here where I can grow and gain new professional skills. In addition to this, I really feel like I am making a difference in other people's lives as well, whereas I had difficulty feeling this way at my previous AmeriCorps sites. I love where I'm at and couldn't think of anything to make it a better experience yet! (NAU)
- I would offer additional ways for the AmeriCorps service members to connect and share stories, experiences, or tips to each other. (NAU)
- Have more funds for travel and advertisement for the program. If I were able to go out and make contacts, I think it would be more productive of my time. There is also a lot of background work that is required to make the website a success—this not considered contact hours. (NAU)
- I am getting a lot of new training through the Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona, in creating community outreach projects that will be very useful in the future, and it would be nice if the rest of my AmeriCorps group could receive this training. (Pima Community College)
- It would be nice to have a set schedule of what preserves we will visit and when, from the beginning of the term. Not knowing makes planning difficult. (The Nature Conservancy)
- I would more specifically lay out expectations of volunteer assignment, and work to match the capacity of the volunteer with the size of project. (UA Wildcats)
- The one change I would make to my volunteer experience would be restructuring one of the lesson plans presented at the Sweetwater Wetlands. This lesson, the watershed, is difficult to present within the time frame because of the amount of material and the need for extra classroom management skills. I feel that with a few twists to the lesson plan, the watershed lesson would be both easier to present and more rewarding for the 3rd graders. (UA Wildcats)
- I would have the AmeriCorps volunteer be more involved in what the organization is doing as a whole. There would be specific objectives set and this person would have a hand in organizing events as well as taking on a few managerial responsibilities. (UA Wildcats)
- I do not foresee myself completing the quarter time hours by the end date because the position requires fewer hours per week than would add up to 450. (I have another part time job on weekends and all days off from my agreed upon three day per week Americorps position.) My supervisor realizes that I need a certain number of scheduled hours per week to meet the goal yet still not enough hours are scheduled. (UA Wildcats)
- I would like to have more time with other AmeriCorps or community members to talk about our volunteering experience and collaborate to contribute more to my service organization. While I enjoy working in the development area of my organization, more direct interaction with refugees and they people I am serving would be ideal as well. (UA Wildcats)
- The only change I would make to my current assignment is having the physical space that supports the work I do. Currently, volunteers and interns bop around to whatever desk and/or computer is open that day. Some days, finding a workspace and computer is challenging. (UA Wildcats)
- I would like for volunteers to have more access to training materials and information. (UA Wildcats)
- A clearer definition of what is required of my service and a little more direction from my superior. I say this with a caveat, there is so much in this community to get involved, even with clear direction, there are many ways to be involved, clear job expectations could limit this. (UA Wildcats)
- This is hard to answer. Originally I wanted to say that a more outlined and detailed job description and list of duties for when I started would be helpful—but this is a completely new position for the

organization I am working for. In fact, one of my duties is to outline what my duties are, so the next person who has my position will have a better understanding of what is expected of them. (UA Wildcats)

- I would prefer to serve at my site in a full-time term because the amount of work that needs to be done is hard to accomplish only being there part-time. (UA Wildcats)
- I would like to become more involved with other departments and begin understanding how United Way works as a whole and how the departments work together. It is a question that although easily verbally answered, has yet to manifest itself before me in actions. (UA Wildcats)
- Better definition of my Public Health assignment and more background information and help at the start of my assignment in connecting with public health partners. (UA Wildcats)
- More independence. (UA Wildcats)
- I would suggest better planning at the front end of the program. I had a lot of problems with getting technically hired, and planning for the program was a bit hectic. (UA Wildcats)
- For the ideal volunteer experience, I would have each member have specific training for the site that they will be serving in. (UA Wildcats)
- More team meetings scheduled for future planning. More time spent introducing new people to the workplace and the responsibilities of the assignment. (UA Wildcats)
- Last year the program was set up so that the AmeriCorps members who were ending their term were still here when the new members were beginning, so the new members were able to learn from and take over what the ending members were doing. I think that would be beneficial to the members and the organization as far as consistency and sustainability. (Volunteer Center)
- To make the ideal volunteer experience I would want more professional development in regards to working with and creating meaningful service learning for youngsters. (Volunteer Center)
- I would want more information from previous years so that we come in with a higher awareness of this is how things have been, this is what worked well, and this is what didn't and why. I feel like we would have been better off if our term would have overlapped with that of previous team leaders. (Volunteer Center)
- I would want more direction in the beginning of my term; then allow for as much independence as I have currently. (Volunteer Center)
- I would do more things! I think I struggle with the hands-off quality of my current position and I really miss doing hands-on things with youth. (Volunteer Center)
- Another member because it sure gets lonely here sometimes. There are always people but not another member. It makes a huge difference. (Volunteer Center)
- One thing I would change about my current AmeriCorps assignment is to have it be more hands-on interaction with the youth and less office work. I would also like to have more work so I could be busier. (Volunteer Center)
- I would like if there was a more structured way to evaluate satisfaction and increased knowledge among the volunteers I work with. This, of course, will be a task that I will endeavor to complete. (Volunteer Center)
- While the amount of autonomy I have had at my site has been great, I do think I'd provide a more comprehensive task list. There are times that I feel spread a little too thin without the power to change the current work load. A more specific directive (or overall game plan) could assist with that. (Yavapai)
- I wish my service was longer so that I could further implement the many foundational programs that I am creating. Other than that I really enjoy and love my position. (Yavapai)
- Make it longer, I feel like I would like to see things through in the long run. (Yavapai)

**What do you see yourself doing next after AmeriCorps? How have recent experiences in AmeriCorps been preparing you for this?**

- I plan on being a therapist for veterans at a VA hospital. My current AmeriCorps assignment provides great experience in working with and helping vets. My experiences with AmeriCorps definitely facilitate this goal. (American Red Cross)
- I see myself going forward to continue work in the non-profit sector, likely still having to do with providing aid to service members, veterans and their families. Going on to a career either at the Red Cross, or another 501 (c) 3 that endeavors to aid humanitarian effort. I do see a Master's Degree in my future. (American Red Cross)
- Remain a Red Cross volunteer. (American Red Cross)
- I will be completing my Pharm.D.; then entering the work force. The planning and teamwork skills I developed with AmeriCorps will prove extremely useful. (American Red Cross)
- I am hoping to continue with the Service to Armed Forces with the Red Cross in some capacity. Perhaps to build the program at the Grand Canyon Chapter to match the abilities of the Southern Arizona Chapter to provide services. All my Americorps experience has given me confidence in my skills and abilities. It has also given me the networking and communication skills that will be needed for me to find gainful employment after my term is concluded. (American Red Cross)
- I am studying social services I would like to obtain my Masters in Social Work. I would like to manage a residential treatment facility for women and children. I feel like Americorps is a very good experience working with mentees and mentors as I am also able to use my personal experience. (American Red Cross)
- Continue on in the community as a homeless advocate, shelter management, and non-profit manager - pursue my degree. (American Red Cross)
- Go back to college. Plan on volunteering more within my community. AmeriCorps has helped me in wanting to volunteer more. (American Red Cross)
- Working on developing a strong Women Veteran network. (American Red Cross)
- Hopefully staying with AmeriCorps in a more leadership role. Recent experiences have taught me networking, leadership, and other skills that will be beneficial. Most importantly, this program has ignited my passion for serving our military and I wish more than anything to be able to stay in it and also provide for my family. (American Red Cross)
- Volunteering at Hospice of the Valley. I've learned a lot about cancer treatment and end-of-life care through my AmeriCorps experience. (Area Agency on Aging)
- Continue to work with area Faith Community in sensitizing them to the importance of volunteerism with the community at large specifically in the area of health and counseling. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I will continue to volunteer at the same agency and I think that I will also try to add another totally different experience in volunteering. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I think I will always be some sort of volunteer. I really like helping people and during my lifetime others have helped me. I thought about reading for the blind perhaps. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I would like to pursue a social services career. I would like to continue working with the seniors and disabled seeking more ways of directing them to richer more rewarding experiences for today's active lifestyles. (Area Agency on Aging)
- I have always wanted to work in an art-related field, and this particular job seems like a path I might want to stick with. This is my first time working with people with developmental disabilities,



and I love it more than I ever imagined I would. AmeriCorps has definitely made me reconsider my ultimate goals and think of new goals that include both my love of art and my newly found passion for working with this community. (Arts for All)

- This experience has opened my eyes to the possibility of making my next career in the mental health sector. I have not yet decided in what capacity, but am leaning towards becoming an art therapist, which would mean returning to college after my AmeriCorps year. (Arts for All)
- My experience with AmeriCorps has enhanced my sense of desired career direction toward the art education field. Serving through AmeriCorps at Arts for All is giving me an excellent groundwork to begin studies in art education at the graduate level. Moreover, my service will be giving me the opportunity in March 2012 to attend the National Art Education Association's conference in New York City, which will allow me to make further inroads in establishing myself as a serious aspirant toward work in the field of art education. (Arts for All)
- I see myself going to school. I have had time to decide what I want to study, how I want to plan and make goals, and now I have a bit more experience in the world of work. (Arts for All)
- I plan on going to NAU in the fall to get a BA in Graphic Design. My experiences have taught me not to procrastinate and that I can achieve anything if I put my mind to it. (Central Arizona College)
- I plan on finishing my schooling and becoming a teacher. AmeriCorps helped me in more ways than i could have ever planned on. It gave me the class room experience i really needed to give me an idea of what i can expect when i finally start my career. . (Central Arizona College)
- I see myself in graduating college. It has prepared me how to deal with different types of people. . (Central Arizona College)
- What I would love to do next is help in disaster relief. I could see myself going to an area that has been hit after a disaster and help people. (Central Arizona College)
- I see myself transferring to the University of Arizona to continue my education. Recent experience has taught me to be prepared and always be willing to do my best. (Central Arizona College)
- Going to college would be ideal; AmeriCorps really helps out with the cost of going to school!
- I would like to be involved with Americorps for as long as possible and would definitely like to serve another term with CREC. (Coconino)
- I would like to continue public service preferably with a fire department.
- I plan on applying for a leadership position within the Minnesota Conservation Corps Superior National Forest Trails program. My current experience is giving me the hard and soft skills I will need as a crew leader, as well as the confidence that I can rise to the challenges that I will face in my position. (Coconino)
- AmeriCorps was great for me, but honestly I did it for my resume. The Ed Award is a nice perk but other than trail vision I haven't really developed that much more than that and tolerance for the ignorance of others. That may sound mean but I am generally not impressed by the entire experience. I feel it is in need of improvement but this could just be me. (Coconino)
- I will continue to do volunteer work somewhere. I have spent a lot of time in child care so looking after children is my main goal. (Mesa UW)
- After I finish my stint with Americorps I will be looking for volunteer positions where I can make a difference. (Mesa UW)
- I am planning to continue my education and learning in a new field. (Mesa UW)
- This experience has made me realize that there are so many people who are seeking help. I will just continue helping wherever I can. (Mesa UW)

- After AmeriCorps, I plan on working to get my Ph.D. in Literature (I'm currently working on my M.A. in addition to doing AmeriCorps). My work with AmeriCorps has given me a different perspective that I feel will help me in my research and in my teaching at the university level. (Mesa UW)
- Permanent employment once I graduate from college and complete my term of service with AmeriCorps. (Mesa UW)
- I am looking forward to the time when I will be able to utilize my educational award. Growing and changing is important to me. I do not wish to remain stagnant. (Mesa UW)
- Continue to be active in serving my community wherever needed. (Mesa UW)
- I see myself going back to school to pursue my Master's or continuing work with a non-profit company. Working in the non-profit sector has shown me how much you can assist people in pursuing their dreams and it brings me joy to do so. (NAU)
- I want to work with preschool special education students! Through my AmeriCorps service, I've been working with children with a variety of needs that I need to plan for and help them with. (NAU)
- I would like to go back to school but I have no idea what for and I have done that once before so maybe I would like to see myself debt-free after my AmeriCorps term. (NAU)
- I am hoping to stay in Flagstaff, AZ and obtain a job at NAU. My ideal would be to somehow create a position within the CSI office so that I may continue to have meaningful work with a team of coworkers and supervisors that I know I work well with. If this is not possible, I would search for other jobs around NAU so that I may receive the tuition waiver to return to graduate school. AmeriCorps has been preparing me for a professional career by giving me skills and knowledge of the type of work I would like to do, helping me make connections around the community, and giving me the confidence to pursue my dreams! (NAU)
- I see myself working with non-profit groups, and with people who express all levels of motivation and education regarding food production. Recent experiences in AmeriCorps have helped me prepare different ways of reaching people who approach a situation differently. (NAU)
- I can anticipate continuing with Economic Development, as my experience with prior employment as well as AmeriCorps has provided me insight on the tribal economic development track, and with connections that will prove invaluable as my career progresses. (NAU)
- My site has helped me in the career path I've chosen, accounting. So after AmeriCorps I can use the skills I have learned at my site in future employment ventures. (NAU)
- I will likely go back to school after the end of my time with my AmeriCorps assignment. Recent experiences in my assignment have given me confidence to move on with a clearer perspective of how I want to relate with the world. I will know more about how I want to relate with the work I do. I will strive to take as many perspectives into account as possible, work to make my profession a more acceptable space for as many different groups of people as possible, and be as compassionate and inclusive in my relationships with the people I serve as professionally reasonable. (NAU)
- I hope to find another job in museum work, or to apply to graduate school. Working at Flagstaff Cultural Partners has been great experience and will help me in these endeavors. (NAU)
- I see myself going back to the reservations to teach in K-12, and creating an adult education program in the evenings as well. Now, that I know how adult education works and its expectations, I can create and volunteer in such a program wherever I decide to teach. (Pima Community College)
- After completing my terms in AmeriCorps, I plan to keep attending school and eventually enroll in medical school in a few years. The experiences I have learned in AmeriCorps will help me with the application process so I can be accepted at a prized medical school. (Pima Community College)

- I see myself continuing to volunteer and be involved in my community, I see myself advancing in school and becoming a better leader for myself and my family. AmeriCorps is helping me reach these goals. (Pima Community College)
- After AmeriCorps, I see myself going to school aiming for a Bachelors degree and continue volunteering. In AmeriCorps I have discover the educational field as well as the administrative part of it and I feel that is something I want to explore in the future. (Pima Community College)
- I will go to college to continue my education and try to continue helping my community in Adult Education. (Pima Community College)
- Hopefully after my experience with the AmeriCorps I will find myself in a similar position of environmental outreach. (The Nature Conservancy)
- I see myself going back to school to get a master's degree in environmental science or ecology. My position has allowed me to understand what I want my focus to be and afforded possible contacts to help make this happen. (The Nature Conservancy)
- I will either be searching for a job similar to the one I currently doing but with more security and responsibility or I will be attending graduate school for natural resource management. (The Nature Conservancy)
- I'm not sure what I'll do next--I know that I want to work in the natural sciences and conservation field, and the skills that I'm learning on this job are going to be a big help. I now know how to use a chainsaw safely and effectively, or a tractor to accomplish a variety of tasks, and I'm signed up to get fire training. (The Nature Conservancy)
- I see myself continuing to work in food and farming issues. (UA Wildcats)
- I would like to work with Food Corps. My experience with the Tucson Village Farm directly relates to preparing for Food Corps. (UA Wildcats)
- After AmeriCorps, I had originally planned to begin graduate school. As the months have gone by, I have realized that I am still not prepared because I struggle to decide what exactly I would like to study (Latin American Studies, Hydrology, or Secondary Education). I am still applying to schools, but I may hold off for another semester or year before leaping into graduate school. If I decide to take another year off, I am considering searching for another position like the one I've held with AmeriCorps. (UA Wildcats)
- Upon completing my AmeriCorps service, I plan to seek full time employment in a high school.
- Finding a job in education, hopefully teaching. Through my time as an Americorps member, I have realized just how much I want to go back to teaching. (UA Wildcats)
- I will be attending the University. Through AmeriCorps I have stayed involved with my community and will be able to continue doing so when I move. With the skills that I am learning now I will be able to join in with any group and have the ability to help out wherever I can. (UA Wildcats)
- I am waiting for my country assignment in the Peace Corps as a secondary education teacher. The classroom management skills I have learned will definitely be of use. (UA Wildcats)
- I see myself working with community outreach programs and volunteer more with communities that are underrepresented and underserved. (UA Wildcats)
- I would like to join the Peace Corps after I am finished with AmeriCorps service. Being in AmeriCorps has helped me realize that I truly enjoy service and I want to continue this passion overseas. It has also increased my empathy as well as my problem solving skills, which I believe are imperative to successful service abroad. (UA Wildcats)
- After my AmeriCorps internship, I hope to find employment at a refugee resettlement agency, like the International Rescue Committee where I am now serving. (UA Wildcats)

- My current Americorps experience is helping me become more proactive. I would like to use these acquired skills to any job setting in the future. (UA Wildcats)
- I will continue with my Graduate program and will begin work as a research assistant. The Americorps experience has helped me with my time management and organizational skills, which continue to be worked on. (UA Wildcats)
- After Americorps I was thinking about either working with another local non-profit organization or perhaps joining the Peace Corps. (UA Wildcats)
- I hope to continue to be active in community service, specifically agriculture/sustainability and natural resource preservation. My experience at Tucson Village Farm has directly prepared for such a path. It has been an amazing learning experience so far. (UA Wildcats)
- I would like to continue working at education-based farms when I finish and I am being very well prepared for this. (UA Wildcats)
- I see myself at a full-time job where I can use the skills acquired in this program. The recent Americorps experience has prepared me in the way that I feel more confident about myself and my leadership skills. (UA Wildcats)
- After my AmeriCorps service I plan on doing social work abroad and then applying for law school for immigration law. Thus far, my AmeriCorps service has developed my cross-cultural communication skills, patience, knowledge of Immigration Law in the U.S., and leadership ability. All of these things are preparing me for my future goals. (UA Wildcats)
- I plan on finishing school and starting my career and AmeriCorps has allowed me to meet many new people and learn so much. It's been an awesome experience and I barely started. (UA Wildcats)
- I plan on teaching Physics and Engineering at the high-school level. The service with AmeriCorps has enabled me grow and improve my educational background, experiences and .skills. (UA Wildcats)
- I see myself continuing with school and using everything I have/will have learned from United Way in whatever I pursue. (UA Wildcats)
- Getting a job in the public health field. My Americorps position directly correlates with the field in which I will be looking to work. (UA Wildcats)
- I am planning on teaching full time, and my time in Americorps has served to reinforce my desire to teach even more. (UA Wildcats)
- Everything I've done in AmeriCorps is involved in education and I am pursuing a degree in education. (UA Wildcats)
- I have always been very interested in joining a VISTA program, and being involved in AmeriCorps is perfect, I think, for preparing me for this. (UA Wildcats)
- I can see myself doing the Peace Corps in the future. I have been exposed to people who are from a different background and culture, which has broadened my experience with different types of people and cultures. (UA Wildcats)
- I see myself doing another term of service at Tucson Village Farm, but I can also see myself going to school full time in pursuit of a degree in Wilderness Therapy, a field that was introduced to me at my Americorps assignment. (UA Wildcats)
- I would like to get more training, either at college or another venue, to become an expert in experiential learning, which I then could apply to being a life coach or a service-learning coordinator. The training that I have been receiving at AmeriCorps has given me the opportunity to take part in experiential learning activities, which I feel is a great way to learn, so I want to become an expert in that field. (Volunteer Center)

- I would really like to continue working with my organization in a similar capacity. AmeriCorps is really giving me the chance to learn more about my organization and the needs of my community. (Volunteer Center)
- I see myself working in the fields of food justice and sustainable agriculture to some degree in my future. That is exactly what I do at my host site and thus am preparing myself with applicable experiences and skills for my future. (Volunteer Center)
- I have no idea what I will be doing after AmeriCorps. I would like to go to graduate school and I feel AmeriCorps is helping me decide what I do (and do not) want to do with my life. (Volunteer Center)
- I would like to look in to bystander awareness training more in depth. I heard someone share it at the Arizona Summit on Volunteerism and Service-Learning, and looked it up after. I will be incorporating this into my service this year with the leadership program. The principles are things I have thought about, but I never knew there were people and programs out there doing it. (Volunteer Center)
- I see myself continuing to work in the nonprofit field. AmeriCorps has enabled me to see inside of how nonprofit organizations work, and has given me experience that I will need for future jobs.
- I hope to continue my work in agricultural/outdoor education with youth. (Volunteer Center)
- I see myself entering graduate school after my AmeriCorps term. I have been gaining more experience with professional communication which I think will benefit me greatly. (Volunteer Center)
- Right now, I would be interested to be more involved with additional groups. Such as a travel group, girls in other leadership roles, etc. (Volunteer Center)
- I imagine working in a similar field that I am working in with AmeriCorps. I really enjoy the work I do at Girl Scouts and hope I am able to continue working here after my service term. (Volunteer Center)
- I would provide more comprehensive training in the beginning so that we could be more independent and feel confident in our abilities. It would have been better if all team members were here from the beginning. I also would have planned activities to take members into the community to help those of us from out of town to get to know the community in which we are working and what resources are available. It would be awesome if we had funding for our AmeriCorps projects so that we aren't limited to that which we can scrape together for free. (Volunteer Center)
- I keep wavering back and forth between ideas. Recently I have thought about opening my own dance studio/community center. So far my AmeriCorps experience isn't everything I hoped it would be, but that has led me to think about what I really want and what really makes me happy. This experience is providing me with great skills for whatever I will do after AmeriCorps. (Volunteer Center)
- After AmeriCorps I would like to work full time and go to grad school part time. My recent Americorps experiences have helped me prepare by experiencing new and diverse situations which gives me additional experience and a better idea of what I would like to do in the future. (Volunteer Center)
- I've been thinking I would either like to do another year of AmeriCorps, or possibly go back to school and get my teaching certificate after this year of service. When I was in high school and college I thought I'd NEVER become a teacher. But, this month has been very inspiring. Seeing the look on a student's face when you've been tutoring them and they finally understand the problem is so great. Knowing that you're helping these students start and finish a big chapter of their life is so rewarding. So, I think I would like to get my teaching certificate to work in a school, unless I do another year of AmeriCorps. (Volunteer Center)

- I am currently applying to graduate schools and the work that I have done through AmeriCorps and the Prescott Center for the Arts (and the self-confidence that has come in tow) definitely has made me a more viable, exciting candidate. The sense of community service and the belief in self that AmeriCorps has instilled in me are two qualities that I truly value, and were needed in my life. (Yavapai)
- I am going to reapply to AmeriCorps and/or hopefully find a full time teaching position in Prescott or the surrounding area. My position with the Girl Scouts has further developed my organizational skills. (Yavapai)
- I see myself moving back to Portland, OR and getting another AmeriCorps position there, and working with the camp world. (Yavapai)

### Appendix 3: Sample of Mentor Responses

**To what extent are the member(s) you mentor failing to meet, meeting, or surpassing your expectations? Explain your response.**

- Most of the members more than surpass my expectations. Each recruitment cycle I am impressed with the caliber of young adults that are part of our program. Occasionally they fail to meet smaller expectations but I believe that to be an information or motivation problem on the end of staff. In other words, finding the right way to communicate and motivate members will always be an evolving thing. But their overall passion and drive for AmeriCorps and the environment continues to impress me. (Coconino Rural)
- The member is surpassing my expectations in communicating and working with our population. She has quickly adapted to our very diverse clients. We see individuals from all walks of life. Many clients have felonies on their records, some are homeless or in some sort of shelter, and others are highly educated professionals. This was really the only concern that I had with introducing any individual into our program but she is doing a fantastic job. (Mesa)
- I had a conversation with the mentor about some concerns. The mentor seemed to really address the concerns "head on" after the meeting and reported she appreciated the feedback. Having a mentor who is willing to receive constructive feedback is very important. (Mesa)
- The members that I mentor are meeting or exceeding my expectations in most areas. They give so much to our program and are very hard workers! Although I have run into some personality struggles, I feel that over all, they have done an outstanding job! (Mesa)
- The mentors that we have hosted have done an excellent job and been very reliable. Most have come to us with previous experience and are able to jump right in and start gaining experience in the field that we put them in. (NAU)
- We are all new at this so I think there is a lot of room for improvement on both the mentor/member performance. I realize that it takes a great deal of attention and organization and follow through to get members working on projects. It has been slow start with one member, because of some personal issues she is going through, but this is improving. My other mentee hit the ground running and has been meeting my expectations. (NAU)
- The member that I am mentoring is beyond surpassing my expectations. He is the kind of worker who takes initiative, can solve problems creatively and quickly, and inspires others to contribute to our goals. (NAU)
- I believe they are trying to meet the expectations, but need additional training. One has been with us for a year, and is meeting expectations; the other just started a couple weeks ago and needs training on many levels, which we are continuing to provide. (NAU)
- This member is surpassing expectations. She works very professionally with the partner organization. She is creative, a team player, energetic, enthusiastic, quick to understand the program and its benefits. With these qualities, she is reaching goals and making a significant impact on conservation. (The Nature Conservancy)
- My members are surpassing expectations! Their teamwork, knowledge and eagerness to help have left me very impressed. They are dedicated to serving their community and being the best teachers they can be, and they constantly make suggestions of things to improve and new ways they could help our agency. (UA Wildcats)

- Our member is definitely meeting our expectations and in some cases surpassing our expectations. He is very skilled with computers, website design and other kinds of graphic design. He started our website, made us a road sign and is now working on making signs for a self-guided tour for visitors. He has taken this project very seriously and artistically and is doing a great job. (UA Wildcats)
- My Americorps member has been a great asset to the team. She shows leadership and an ability to provide helpful input while at the same time plugging into the action plans we design. Her time management skills are excellent. (UA Wildcats)
- The member I am currently mentoring is surpassing my expectations. She holds herself accountable for her work, completes projects before their deadlines but above and beyond the quality expected of her. She is a pleasure to work with and is always willing to learn new things, correct her mistakes and ask questions. . (UA Wildcats)
- Our Americorps member is doing an excellent job [exceeding expectations] and is poised to contribute in even greater ways next semester. She has willingly taken on the responsibilities and activities we agreed upon and has initiated several on her own to begin next semester. (Volunteer Center)
- Our member is outstanding in most areas, and meets expectations in others. Her skills in time management, youth development, and data management are great and well utilized. Communication and teamwork can be better, but I believe the member is developing these skills during her time here. (Volunteer Center)
- The AmeriCorps members are exceeding my expectations in taking initiative. There is one member who isn't, but the rest of the group is setting a good example for her. The members are also incredibly dedicated to quality programming, which is an expectation that was not necessarily met by the last cohort. (Volunteer Center)
- The member I am mentoring is excellent so far and is solidly meeting my high expectations. She is enthusiastic, focused and hard working. She has a good sense of humor and gets along well with others. She is prompt and works well independently. She has shown patience with others. She has developed a variety of new skills in the areas of animal care and handling and is still on a steep learning curve with regard to a variety of responsibilities in that area. (Volunteer Center)
- My members are definitely meeting or surpassing my expectations. Ours Teens Taking Action program has increased to include a class-based group during school hours. The members had to create and design new program components for the school and get the program off and running. It has involved a lot of additional work and I'm amazed at how thorough they have been. It's been exciting to watch this process and see their reaction and how they have handled all the details. (Yavapai)
- They are meeting and surpassing my expectations. They are fun, full of passion and energy and very trustworthy. They care about our organization's mission and understand how their passions and work are connected to the organization and our girl scouts. (Yavapai)
- The member has surpassed all expectations in a myriad number of ways. He is an extraordinary performer, director, entrepreneur and, of course, technical director, his main duty. If there is any short-coming, he sometimes misses a deadline or promises work which doesn't get completed, but these are very few and far between and usually inconsequential. He is a very hard worker and when he leaves, he will leave huge shoes to be filled. (Yavapai)
- The members are surpassing my expectations as they are getting tremendous work done that aligns with their personal passion and the mission of the organization. They also work very well together and we have a high level of trust with one another. (Yavapai)



**Please share a single accomplishment of a member that stands out.**

- We needed a training program for volunteers. A member generated a 26-slide Powerpoint covering all key concepts, requested feedback from our experienced volunteers, and included their input into the final product. This will significantly impact training program for over 75 volunteers during the January training and followup service. (Mesa)
- The member has developed a resource file box that contains information regarding assistance for those in need for food, shelter, clothing and health-related issues. A few months ago, a young couple came in desperate for assistance and she was able to direct them to the services they needed in a kind and caring way. She handled this challenge with such grace and poise and was able to find a solution for the problem. (Mesa)
- Two of our members run our Christmas gift program. They work hard on gathering, sorting, and organizing gifts all year long (along with still helping with normal day-to-day operations). Two weeks ago we were able to serve over 1,400 children with gifts for Christmas! This really shows the dedication these members have to our organization and to the AmeriCorps program. (Mesa)
- I asked one of our mentors to come up with a couple of weeks of curriculum for our teen summer camp program. She came up with the entire summer's worth of curriculum, so instead of 2 weeks of curriculum she came up with 12. Outstanding work!! (NAU)
- A few weeks ago, the member hosted and led a meeting to discuss a new program we are implementing on campus, a Green Office Certification. He organized the meeting and led the group through a charrette process for the new program. This has been one of the most active and energetic meetings that I have been to in a while. Kudos to him. (NAU)
- She has made numerous phone calls to learners who we haven't seen in a while and has gotten many to start using our services again and to help them feel welcome. Her efforts over a short period of time have helped increase the number of learners we serve. (NAU)
- This member trained fifteen 7th and 8th graders from an environmental club on the concepts of the water conservation program, and these students are using their training to teach those concepts to students in an elementary school. The fifteen students will help at a preserve in February to teach the material to 3rd graders from a local school district. The member accomplished this three weeks after the start of the member year. It is an example of leveraging member time to expand the impact of the program goals. (The Nature Conservancy)
- One female member has been the take-charge leader of the group. She is proactive and thoughtful and is always the first to volunteer whether it be learning a new skill or initiating a project. I gave her a book on stream restoration techniques and she went out and built the structures and applied the principles perfectly. (The Nature Conservancy)
- I have a group accomplishment to share, which illustrates the teamwork and talents of all our members. We recently held a media and visitor day at Sweetwater Wetlands. FOX news was there, as well as representatives from The Nature Conservancy and the Regional Science Center. Each member perfected the lesson they were most comfortable with and worked to get the equipment in top-notch shape. One member, who excels at organization, took care of paperwork and directing teachers and students when they arrived for their field trip. A second member, who happens to not only be an AmeriCorps water educator but a professional photographer and filmmaker, took beautiful photographs of the event. Every one of our members shone that day, and they helped get the word out about our program and important water issues in our community. (UA Wildcats)

- A member assisted youth in designing, planning and executing a car wash fundraiser to raise money and awareness about the drought in Somalia. The member empowered high school students to plan the entire event, including booking a location, collecting supplies, and recruiting volunteers. The students raised \$320. (UA Wildcats)
- The member created four excellent handouts on child safety seat selection, usage and other car safety issues. She spent a great deal of time researching but could not find any one source that met our needs. With minimal guidance, she was able to use this research to create handouts that were comprehensive, easy to use and understand, and graphically engaging. (UA Wildcats)
- The member's previous knowledge of the food system and facility with Spanish have allowed her, in many instances, to participate in educational presentations we provide to childcare providers in our program. Being able to actively participate in education in a non-native language shows strong leadership. (UA Wildcats)
- Member completed our Fall 2011 survey of GED students. Her activities included editing the previous survey, getting the survey online, administering the survey online and on paper in the GED classes, compiling results, and summarizing in report form. (UA Wildcats)
- The member created and edited an entire "Medical Resource Guide" for our special medical clients. She gathered important information about clients, created individualized guides for their medical needs, and continues to add and improve this resource. I was extremely proud of the work she did and now we can distribute it to our clients (approximately 40) to help them manage their medical needs. I have not seen an individual complete a project like this in the short amount of time she had with such quality and consistency. (UA Wildcats)
- The member completed a much needed Self-Advocacy curriculum for refugee women and mothers in Tucson. The curriculum will help refugee women understand their rights and responsibilities and learn about their personal needs, strengths and weaknesses, gain skills for how to effectively communicate their needs and preferences, and how to create action plans to meet their accommodation needs. (UA Wildcats)
- One of our members has a passion (and several degrees) in archeology. She has designed and developed a new learning "station" at Tucson Village Farm which focuses on what people used to eat in the area and what we are eating now, highlighting the similarities and differences. She has even acquired a donation of prehistoric artifacts to use as props at the station. This was an amazing win-win situation. She took her knowledge and experience and as a result we will have an amazing station in operation long past her service. . (UA Wildcats)
- My AmeriCorps members are scheduling 4-H club presentations for youth and adult members in Pinal County 4-H for all 26 clubs in the county. Presentations have been planned by the members. They are presenting either parliamentary procedure, leadership or recreation workshops to help strengthen the 4-H clubs. I received a phone call from one of my community club leaders telling me how wonderful my AmeriCorps member did and how much the youth in the club enjoyed the presentation! (UA Wildcats)
- Although there are a number of accomplishments that our member has achieved, including inspiring students to be recycling recruiters and facilitating a student-developed exhibit on the evolution of writing and technology, her development of our program systems for scheduling and operations has had the most impact on the entire program and on all the students. She has really reinvented these. Because of her creativity and practicality, the kids have a more engaging and stimulation experience during their time here. (Volunteer Center)

- The member has taken on the role of assistant camp director for our summer programs. She has established herself as an incredible body of knowledge for leading youth in outdoor activities and has surpassed our expectations during the planning period. . (Volunteer Center)
- Our mentor has worked closely with our student advisory sections to help them define service learning projects. She designed a mini-grant application process and worked with students and faculty to help them submit grant applications to fund their projects. For one of these projects, she brought in community partners and organized a community volunteer day for the project. (Volunteer Center)
- The member has managed to fit in well with peers, supervisors and youth in a variety of workplace settings. This sounds like an easy task, but in our place of business it is complex and dynamic challenge. Each day, she works with 15 to 40 people with diverse job descriptions and levels of responsibilities. She has easily settled-in and been accepted by everyone. As she continues with her work with us, she will have great success due in part to the successful relationships she has developed in the first quarter. (Volunteer Center)
- December was a very emotional month for a lot of the girls in our Girl Talk program. Not only were they excited about the holidays, but there was actually some drama building between a few of the girls regarding the clothes they and others wore. Ironically, our member had already planned the next week's lesson on that topic. The whole point of the lesson was to not judge other people for what they are wearing but to focus on who they are! In delivering that lesson, she knew why she was needed at the school. It proved to her that she can make a difference in the lives of others, and even in rough times to never give up. (Yavapai)
- The member created a marketing strategy for the community involving scavenger hunts. These involved area merchants whose businesses became the hunt locations for patrons to visit and collect proof of attendance, making them eligible for prizes. It served to bring more costumers to the merchants, as well as promoting our program's Christmas theatrical events resulting in higher ticket sales. The strategy was a win-win-win all around, and very successful both from a creative and participation standpoint. (Yavapai)
- A part-time member did the entire organizing of our Family Camp and it was done so well. She was incredible with the participants, all the program activities and supplies were age-appropriate, she communicated with everyone that needed information and the families had an incredible time! (Yavapai)

**If you could design the ideal volunteer experience, what changes would you make with regard to your current AmeriCorps program?**

- Be able to use them for more time at more of a volunteer rate. In comparison to the Federal Work Study program, Americorps members are high in price for the amount of responsibility they are allowed to have. (NAU)
- I would like to see AmeriCorps use America Reads Data Collection in lieu of the additional survey that members complete. (NAU)
- I would add a second member position as the goals for this position are lofty and with two positions the member could get additional professional development training in marketing the program and expanding the volunteer base for expanded results. (The Nature Conservancy)
- I would dedicate more time for teaching/mentoring them. They learn fast and much would be gained to be able to spend more time with them. (The Nature Conservancy)
- The ideal situation would be to have more AmeriCorps members. They are such a vital part of our program. I would have more time to develop our program instead of substituting for absent

members and doing tasks that have been assigned to AmeriCorps members in the past. Our current members would be under less pressure as well, making it a better experience for them. (UA Wildcats)

- I would have specific training sessions/brown bag meetings to further develop their skills and give members additional tools they can use to advance their knowledge and careers. (UA Wildcats)
- More direct service opportunities without having a fair in the spring! (UA Wildcats)
- I can honestly say I wouldn't change a thing. It is an excellent program which provides opportunities for young adults who are finding job searching challenging and gives them a skill set to move forward in their lives. (UA Wildcats)
- Very little. The program has been a tremendous asset to us. It is all about finding the right person who wants to work in a school and learn while they serve. The only change I can think of relates to scheduling -- it would be much easier to start a volunteer before school starts rather than assimilate them in October. (Volunteer Center)
- It is my experience that AmeriCorps members could use more training on the front end prior to joining a host site. Specifically, training should focus on local culture and local agencies in town. . (Volunteer Center)
- A better alignment between AmeriCorps program and our program. Work is more efficient when both programs are working towards the same goals—although, the difference in goals has influenced us to be more creative and expand our purposes and services. (Volunteer Center)
- It would be beneficial to have members start during the summer months before school begins so that they would be geared up and ready to go when school starts. This would benefit for recruiting youth volunteers and establishing community connections before everyone's calendars fill up for the year. (Volunteer Center)
- I would have liked to have had them all start at the same time. I would have also liked to see them have more experience in working with this age group of youth. It would have also been great to have them all cleared through background checks on a faster timeline (no fault of ours, the regulations requires a lengthy process through the FBI). (Volunteer Center)
- I mentor one member now. It would be nice to have two or three members working together. Then, they could learn from each other as well and produce synergistic outcomes. (Volunteer Center)
- In the ideal world we wouldn't have to spend so much time on participant recruitment for our program. It takes a lot of staff and member time and is often frustrating. Yet, I believe our members are gaining skills through this and learning to problem solve and think outside the box. They have come up with some great ideas regarding recruitment. (Yavapai)
- We would have liked to have our member earlier in the year so the transition for him would have been less hectic and stressful. More time to train would have helped. (Yavapai)



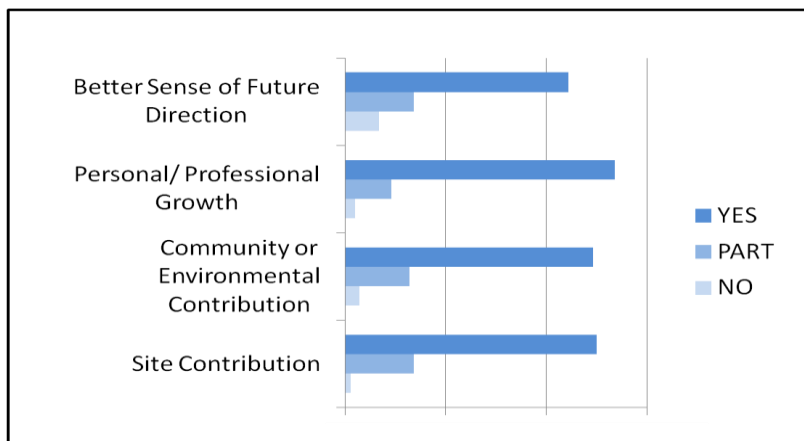
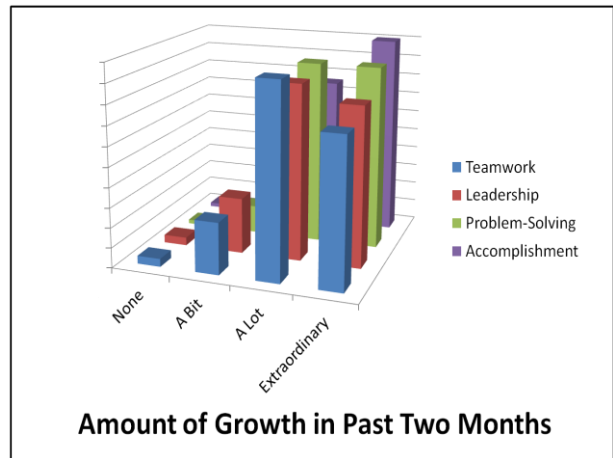
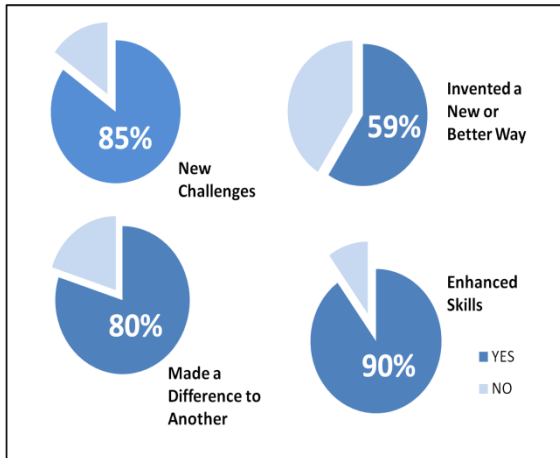
Arizona  
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Commission  
on **Service** and  
**Volunteerism**



# Evaluation Report #2

## May 2012





## Overview

This is the second of three evaluation reports that focus on the AmeriCorps experience for members in Arizona throughout the 2011-2012 funding cycle. The intent is to shed light on the rich and often life-altering member journeys and associated impacts, as told through their varied voices.

Two sources of data were used to produce this report. First, in late April 2012, all AmeriCorps members were encouraged to provide feedback on recent experiences. They were given four narrative probes and 19 items to rate. Second, their mentors were also encouraged to provide similar narrative and quantitative feedback based on their observations of the members. A secure website was used for both sets of entries. To gain most from this report, the reader should explore both the hard data and the supporting narratives provided by the members and mentors.

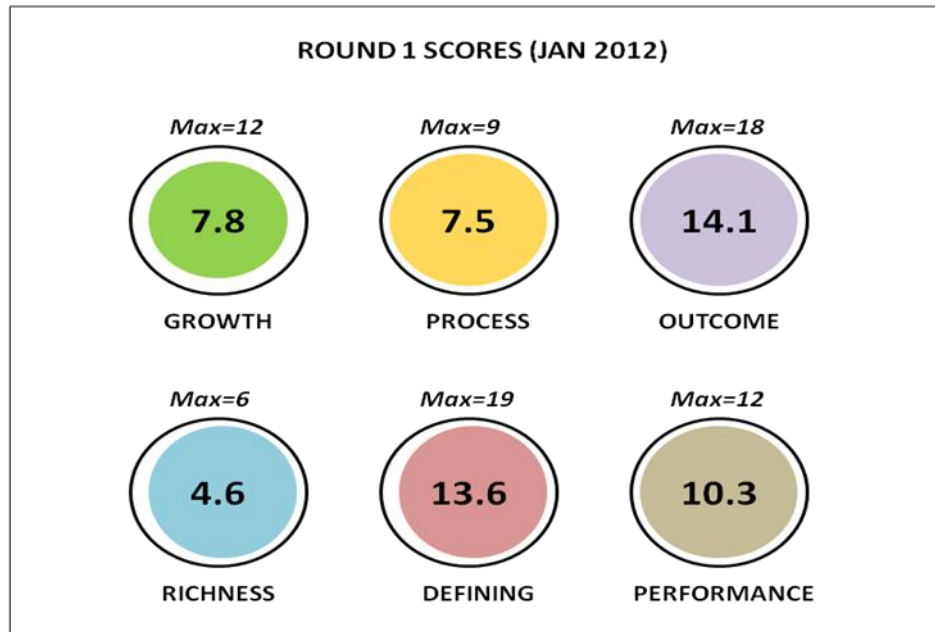
Feedback was received from 162 AmeriCorps members representing 13 programs in Arizona. Included were 127 females and 33 males (two anonymous respondents did not indicate their gender). Their age range was as follows: 72 members were ages 17-25, 46 members were ages 26-49, and 44 members were 50 or older. 101 members from Arizona and 58 members from out-of-state (three respondents did not indicate home state). The vast majority were first-year members. Feedback was also received from 75 mentors from eleven of these programs.

Numeric responses for the 19 items self-rated by the members were used to produce five composite scores. A sixth score was generated from mentor responses to four items. The scores include:

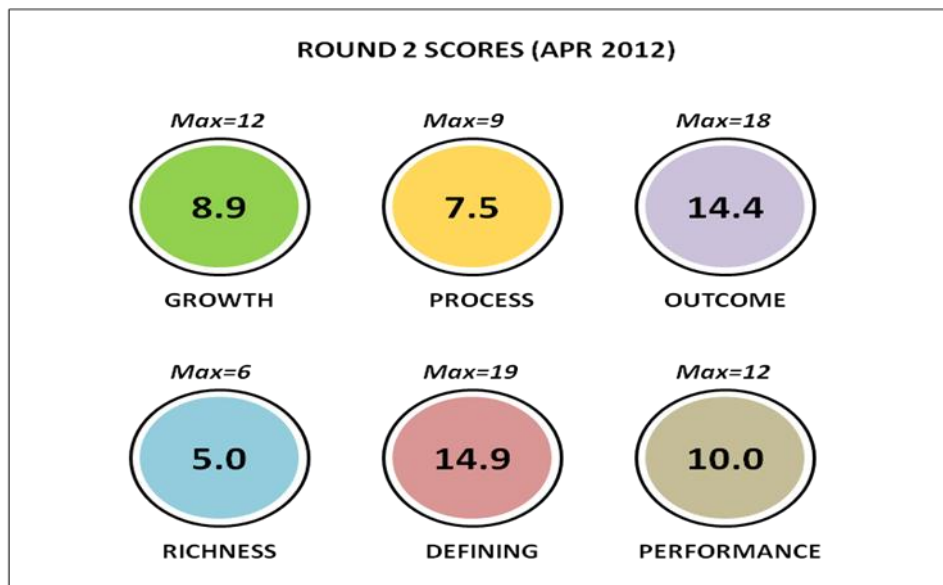
- **Growth Score:** A composite of four items that reflect recent improvements reported by the members in their teamwork, leadership, problem-solving skills, and sense of accomplishment.
- **Process Score:** A composite of three items that indicate the extent to which members feel their recent assignments match their skill sets and interests and offer opportunities for initiative. Mentors independently rate these same three items.
- **Outcome Score:** A composite of six items that express what members feel they have gained recently in terms of deeper understanding of the service sector and their specific communities, contributions they have made to their sites and to the community or environment, their personal or professional growth, and their clarity regarding personal future directions. Mentors independently rate these same six items.
- **Richness Score:** A composite of six items reflecting recent member experiences related to encountering something new, increasing their skills, enjoying themselves, inventing a new or better way to perform a task, making a difference for another, and serving as a mentor. Mentors independently rate these same six items.
- **Defining Moment Score:** A unique blending of nine of the 19 items as a predictor that members are having life-transforming experiences.
- **Performance Score:** A composite of four items from mentor ratings that indicate abilities of members to function independently, complete assignments in timely manner, work well in teams, and be assets to their sites.

These six scores for Round 1 are arrayed in the chart below. Overall, the members were realizing 76 percent of the ideal possible experience.





Three months later, the scores had increased in four areas, remained the same in one area, and dropped a tad in one area. The members were now realizing 80 percent of the ideal possible experience.



## Growth Scores

In January 2012 (Round 1) and again in April 2012 (Round 2), AmeriCorps members throughout Arizona were encouraged to log-on to a secure site and self-rate how much their recent experiences had led to improvements in four areas: teamwork, leadership, problem-solving skills, and sense of accomplishment. They rated each item using the following scale: 0=no improvement; 1=a bit of improvement; 2=a lot of improvement; and 3=an extraordinary amount of improvement.

In round 1, 152 members responded. In round 2, 162 members responded. The results are summarized below. Ratings for Round 1 were quite high, with members reporting a lot of improvement, on average, in all four areas. Ratings for Round 2, as can be seen, were even more impressive. In each of the four areas there was a shift, on average, from a lot toward extraordinary improvements. Most notable was the higher average ratings for problem-solving skills improvement, moving from 2.1 to 2.4 (out of an ideal maximum of 3).

|                         | ROUND 1 |  | NUMBER |  |        | ROUND 2 |  | NUMBER |  |        |
|-------------------------|---------|--|--------|--|--------|---------|--|--------|--|--------|
|                         | 1       |  | 152    |  |        | 2       |  | 162    |  |        |
| Teamwork                | 2.1     |  | max=3  |  |        | 2.2     |  | max=3  |  |        |
| Leadership              | 2.0     |  |        |  |        | 2.2     |  |        |  |        |
| Problem-Solving         | 2.1     |  |        |  |        | 2.4     |  |        |  |        |
| Sense of Accomplishment | 2.2     |  |        |  |        | 2.4     |  |        |  |        |
| <b>GROWTH SCORE</b>     |         |  | 8.4    |  | max=12 |         |  | 9.1    |  | max=12 |

The Growth Score is the sum of the four averages. That score increased from 8.4 to 9.1 from Round 1 to Round 2 out of a maximum possible of 12.

Overall gains reported by females and males were similar across the two rounds. Female members reported most improvement in problem-solving (2.4) and largest changes from Round 1 to Round 2 in leadership (1.9 to 2.2) and sense of accomplishment (2.1 to 2.3). Males reported most improvement in sense of accomplishment (2.5) and largest changes in problem-solving (2.1 to 2.3) and sense of accomplishment (2.3 to 2.5).

| Growth Area     | Females |     | Males |     | Ages 17-25 |     | Ages 26-49 |     | Ages 50 or over |     | From Arizona |     | Out-of-State |     |
|-----------------|---------|-----|-------|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|
|                 | Jan     | Apr | Jan   | Apr | Jan        | Apr | Jan        | Apr | Jan             | Apr | Jan          | Apr | Jan          | Apr |
| Teamwork        | 2.1     | 2.2 | 2.1   | 2.2 | 2.0        | 2.0 | 2.0        | 2.4 | 2.3             | 2.3 | 2.1          | 2.3 | 2.0          | 2.1 |
| Leadership      | 1.9     | 2.2 | 2.1   | 2.2 | 2.0        | 2.2 | 1.9        | 2.3 | 2.3             | 2.1 | 2.1          | 2.3 | 1.8          | 2.2 |
| Problem-Solving | 2.3     | 2.4 | 2.1   | 2.3 | 2.1        | 2.4 | 2.2        | 2.4 | 2.3             | 2.3 | 2.2          | 2.4 | 2.1          | 2.3 |

|                     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Sense of Accomplish | 2.1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.0 | 2.3 |
| GROWTH SCORE        | 8.4 | 9.1 | 8.6 | 9.2 | 8.2 | 8.8 | 8.1 | 9.6 | 9.4 | 9.2 | 8.7 | 9.4 | 7.9 | 8.9 |

There were some interesting differences across age groups. The age group from 26-49 reported the most improvement across the four areas (from 8.1 to 9.6). While the Growth Score for the 50+ age group was still very high (9.2), there was a slight drop from the ratings reported in January (9.4).

In both rounds, members from Arizona reported more improvement in each of the four areas than their peers from out-of-state. However, the change from January to April was more pronounced for the out-of-state members (Growth Scores increased by a full point from 7.9 to 8.9).

## Process Scores

In January 2012 (Round 1) and again in April 2012 (Round 2), the AmeriCorps members self-rated the extent to which their assignments matched their skills and interests, and provide opportunities to take initiative. They rated each of the three items using the following scale: 0=not the case; 1=partly true; and 3=fully true. The three ratings were totaled to produce a Process Score. The aggregate results are summarized below:

|                             |                   |       |       |                   |       |       |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|
|                             | ROUND 1<br>NUMBER |       |       | ROUND 2<br>NUMBER |       |       |
|                             | 1                 | 152   |       | 2                 | 162   |       |
| Assignments Match Skills    | 2.6               | max=3 |       | 2.5               | max=3 |       |
| Assignments Match Interests | 2.6               |       |       | 2.5               |       |       |
| Freedom to Take Initiative  | 2.5               |       |       | 2.5               |       |       |
| PROCESS SCORE               |                   | 7.7   | max=9 |                   | 7.5   | max=9 |

The feedback from the members was already quite high in January and there was a slight drop in the Process Score in April (from 7.7 to 7.5 out of a maximum of 9). Females reported less satisfaction with their assignments than males in Round 2 (7.2 versus 7.6). The 50+ age group reported the greatest drop, from 8.0 to 7.2 with rating declines in each of the three categories.

| Process Area          | Females |     | Males |     | Ages 17-25 |     | Ages 26-49 |     | Ages 50 or over |     | From Arizona |     | Out-of-State |     |
|-----------------------|---------|-----|-------|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|
|                       | Jan     | Apr | Jan   | Apr | Jan        | Apr | Jan        | Apr | Jan             | Apr | Jan          | Apr | Jan          | Apr |
| Match Skills          | 2.6     | 2.5 | 2.7   | 2.6 | 2.6        | 2.6 | 2.7        | 2.6 | 2.7             | 2.4 | 2.7          | 2.6 | 2.5          | 2.5 |
| Match Interests       | 2.6     | 2.5 | 2.6   | 2.5 | 2.6        | 2.5 | 2.6        | 2.5 | 2.6             | 2.4 | 2.6          | 2.5 | 2.5          | 2.5 |
| Freedom to Initiative | 2.5     | 2.5 | 2.6   | 2.5 | 2.4        | 2.5 | 2.6        | 2.5 | 2.7             | 2.4 | 2.6          | 2.5 | 2.5          | 2.5 |
| <b>PROCESS SCORE</b>  | 7.7     | 7.5 | 7.9   | 7.6 | 7.6        | 7.6 | 7.9        | 7.6 | 8.0             | 7.2 | 7.9          | 7.6 | 7.5          | 7.5 |

The mentors also rated these same three areas in January and April. Their ratings were slightly but consistently higher than the members in each of the areas. Their Process Scores were 8.2 in January and 8.0 in April compared to 7.7 and 7.5, as assigned by the members.

## Outcome Scores

In both rounds, the AmeriCorps members self-rated their achievements with respect to six outcomes, as listed in the chart below. They rated each of the items using the following scale: 0=not the case; 1=partly true; and 3=fully true. The six ratings were totaled to produce an Outcome Score. The aggregate results are summarized below.

|                              | ROUND 1 |  | NUMBER |  |  | ROUND 2 |  | NUMBER |  |
|------------------------------|---------|--|--------|--|--|---------|--|--------|--|
|                              | 1       |  | 152    |  |  | 2       |  | 162    |  |
| Know How Service Orgs Work   | 2.5     |  | max=3  |  |  | 2.5     |  | max=3  |  |
| Made Site Contribution       | 2.4     |  |        |  |  | 2.5     |  |        |  |
| Know How Community Works     | 2.6     |  |        |  |  | 2.7     |  |        |  |
| Made Community Contribution  | 2.3     |  |        |  |  | 2.5     |  |        |  |
| Professional/Personal Growth | 2.6     |  |        |  |  | 2.6     |  |        |  |
| Sense of Future Direction    | 2.2     |  |        |  |  | 2.3     |  |        |  |
| <b>OUTCOME SCORE</b>         | 14.6    |  | max=18 |  |  | 15.0    |  | max=18 |  |

In April, the members reported the same or modest increases in accomplishments from those reported in January (14.6 to 15.0, out of maximum of 18). Their ratings in both periods were quite high. The biggest change was in their reports of making a contribution to the community (or environment), from 2.3 to 2.5, out of maximum of 3. The independent ratings by the mentors closely matched those of the members. For example, the mentors also rated community contributions, on average, as 2.3 and 2.5 in the two rounds of reporting. Mentor ratings for site contributions were 2.4 and 2.6 in Rounds 1 and 2.

Females and youth reported more accomplishments than their counterparts in Round 2. The 50+ age group reported drops in their accomplishments between the two rounds in five of six outcome areas.

| Outcome Areas       | Females |     | Males |     | Ages 17-25 |     | Ages 26-49 |     | Ages 50 or over |     | From Arizona |     | Out-of-State |     |
|---------------------|---------|-----|-------|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|
|                     | Jan     | Apr | Jan   | Apr | Jan        | Apr | Jan        | Apr | Jan             | Apr | Jan          | Apr | Jan          | Apr |
| Know Service Sector | 2.5     | 2.5 | 2.4   | 2.3 | 2.5        | 2.5 | 2.5        | 2.5 | 2.7             | 2.4 | 2.5          | 2.6 | 2.6          | 2.3 |
| Impact Local Site   | 2.4     | 2.6 | 2.4   | 2.5 | 2.3        | 2.5 | 2.2        | 2.5 | 2.6             | 2.5 | 2.5          | 2.6 | 2.2          | 2.4 |
| Know Community      | 2.7     | 2.7 | 2.6   | 2.6 | 2.6        | 2.7 | 2.6        | 2.7 | 2.6             | 2.6 | 2.6          | 2.8 | 2.7          | 2.6 |
| Impact Community    | 2.1     | 2.5 | 2.4   | 2.5 | 2.2        | 2.5 | 2.2        | 2.6 | 2.4             | 2.3 | 2.4          | 2.6 | 2.0          | 2.4 |
| Individual Growth   | 2.6     | 2.7 | 2.6   | 2.5 | 2.7        | 2.7 | 2.5        | 2.7 | 2.6             | 2.5 | 2.6          | 2.7 | 2.5          | 2.5 |

|                 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Sense of Future | 2.2  | 2.3  | 2.2  | 2.3  | 2.1  | 2.3  | 2.5  | 2.4  | 2.3  | 2.0  | 2.3  | 2.4  | 2.1  | 2.2  |
| OUTCOME SCORE   | 14.5 | 15.3 | 14.6 | 14.6 | 14.4 | 15.2 | 14.5 | 15.4 | 15.2 | 14.3 | 14.9 | 15.7 | 14.1 | 14.4 |

## Richness Scores

In both rounds, the mentors were presented with six types of experience (see chart below) and asked to put a check mark by each one they had encountered during the past two months. Each experience checked earned 1 point; if not checked, a 0. The points were added to produce a Richness Score. The maximum possible score was 6, one for each of the items checked. The aggregate results, averaged across all the members, are presented below:

|                              | ROUND 1 |       | NUMBER |       |  | ROUND 2 |       | NUMBER |       |
|------------------------------|---------|-------|--------|-------|--|---------|-------|--------|-------|
|                              | 1       |       | 152    |       |  | 2       |       | 162    |       |
| New Situations               | 0.8     | max=1 |        |       |  | 0.8     | max=1 |        |       |
| Skill Enhancement            | 0.8     |       |        |       |  | 0.9     |       |        |       |
| Enjoyment                    | 0.9     |       |        |       |  | 0.9     |       |        |       |
| Invented New or Better Way   | 0.6     |       |        |       |  | 0.6     |       |        |       |
| Made a Difference to Another | 0.7     |       |        |       |  | 0.8     |       |        |       |
| Served as Role Model         | 0.7     |       |        |       |  | 0.7     |       |        |       |
| <b>RICHNESS SCORE</b>        |         |       | 4.5    | max=6 |  |         |       | 4.7    | max=6 |

On average, around 80 percent of the members reported having these experiences in both rounds. There was a slight increase in reported incidents in Round 2 (from 4.5 to 4.7, out of maximum of 6). The mentors reported near identical results as the members in the two rounds based on their observations.

The most dramatic increase between the two rounds was reported by the 50+ group. They had the lowest reported incidents in January and had jumps in five of the six types of experiences. For example, 50 percent of the group now reported having invented something new or better as compared with only 30 percent in January.

| Experiences           | Females |     | Males |     | Ages 17-25 |     | Ages 26-49 |     | Ages 50 or over |     | From Arizona |     | Out-of-State |     |
|-----------------------|---------|-----|-------|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|
|                       | Jan     | Apr | Jan   | Apr | Jan        | Apr | Jan        | Apr | Jan             | Apr | Jan          | Apr | Jan          | Apr |
| New Situations        | 0.8     | 0.8 | 0.8   | 0.9 | 0.9        | 0.9 | 0.8        | 0.8 | 0.6             | 0.7 | 0.8          | 0.8 | 0.8          | 0.9 |
| Skill Enhancement     | 0.8     | 0.9 | 0.8   | 0.9 | 0.9        | 0.9 | 0.8        | 0.9 | 0.8             | 0.8 | 0.8          | 0.9 | 0.8          | 0.9 |
| Enjoyed Self          | 0.9     | 0.9 | 0.9   | 0.9 | 1.0        | 1.0 | 0.9        | 0.9 | 0.8             | 0.9 | 0.9          | 0.9 | 0.9          | 1.0 |
| Inventive             | 0.6     | 0.6 | 0.6   | 0.5 | 0.7        | 0.6 | 0.6        | 0.6 | 0.3             | 0.5 | 0.5          | 0.6 | 0.7          | 0.6 |
| Made a Difference     | 0.7     | 0.8 | 0.7   | 0.8 | 0.7        | 0.7 | 0.6        | 0.8 | 0.8             | 0.9 | 0.8          | 0.8 | 0.6          | 0.8 |
| Served as Mentor      | 0.7     | 0.8 | 0.7   | 0.7 | 0.8        | 0.7 | 0.7        | 0.8 | 0.6             | 0.7 | 0.7          | 0.7 | 0.7          | 0.8 |
| <b>RICHNESS SCORE</b> | 4.5     | 4.8 | 4.5   | 4.7 | 5.0        | 4.9 | 4.4        | 4.8 | 3.9             | 4.5 | 4.5          | 4.7 | 4.5          | 5.0 |

## Defining Moment Scores

“Defining moments” are insightful episodes or experiences which catalyze personal growth and new life trajectories. Catalysts for such moments may include major life crises, such as a debilitating injury or illness, the death of a spouse, or sudden unemployment. They may also be triggered by an opportunity-rich environment that triggers expanded awareness of new possibilities and offers safety and supports for risk-taking and transformational learning. The AmeriCorps experience seems particularly ripe for the emergence of these defining moments. First, the lives of members are typically in transition. Second, they are provided with opportunities, encouragement and support to stretch personally and professionally. Third, they are rewarded through witnessing both their own growth and the delight on the faces of those they serve. In consequence, as described in narratives later in this report, many members reported that they had changed in positive ways and were reformulating their goals for the next years of their lives.

Drawing from member responses to nine of the 19 self-rated items, a Defining Moment Score was computed for each member. The average score across all 162 respondents was 15.2 out of a maximum of 19. This score represented a 0.7 point gain from the 14.5 score computed from the January ratings. Viewed as a probability, the April results suggest that members, on average, had an 80 percent chance of having a defining moment during the past two months (15.2 divided by 19, times 100). Below are the results by member characteristics. The group ages 26-49 had the highest probability for defining moments (83%) and also the greatest change between January and April (9%). Each group, apart from the 50+ age group (which dropped from 78% to 77%) had slightly more positive results in Round 2.

| All Members |      | Females |      | Males |      | Ages 17-25 |      | Ages 26-49 |      | Ages 50 or over |      | From Arizona |      | Out-of-State |      |
|-------------|------|---------|------|-------|------|------------|------|------------|------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|--------------|------|
| Jan         | Apr  | Jan     | Apr  | Jan   | Apr  | Jan        | Apr  | Jan        | Apr  | Jan             | Apr  | Jan          | Apr  | Jan          | Apr  |
| 14.5        | 15.2 | 14.2    | 15.3 | 14.7  | 15.0 | 14.6       | 15.3 | 14.1       | 15.8 | 14.9            | 14.7 | 14.9         | 15.6 | 13.6         | 14.9 |
| 76%         | 80%  | 75%     | 81%  | 77%   | 79%  | 78%        | 81%  | 74%        | 83%  | 78%             | 77%  | 78%          | 82%  | 72%          | 78%  |

## Performance Scores

The mentors were also asked to rate how well their members performed in four areas: ability to work independently with minimum supervision, completing assignments in timely manner, exhibiting high standards of teamwork, and being a definite asset to their host agency. They rated each item using the following scale: 0=no; 1=somewhat; 2=mostly; and 3=fully. Adding the four ratings yielded a Performance Score for the members they mentored.

In round 1, 53 mentors responded. In round 2, 75 members responded. The results were similar for the two rounds. The composite Performance Score in January was 10.3 out of a maximum of 12; the Score in

April was 10.0. The highest rated item in both rounds was being an asset to the host site (2.7 out of a maximum of 3). Also scoring very high was teamwork (2.7 in January and 2.6 in April). The average rating for completing work timely was 2.5 in both rounds. The average ratings for working independently were 2.4 (Round 1) and 2.3 (Round 2), still relatively high.

|                        |       |        |            |       |        |            |
|------------------------|-------|--------|------------|-------|--------|------------|
|                        | ROUND | NUMBER |            | ROUND | NUMBER |            |
|                        | 1     | 53     |            | 2     | 75     |            |
| Work Independently     | 2.4   | max=3  |            | 2.3   | max=3  |            |
| Complete Work Timely   | 2.5   |        |            | 2.5   |        |            |
| Teamwork               | 2.7   |        |            | 2.6   |        |            |
| Definite Asset to Site | 2.7   |        |            | 2.7   |        |            |
| PERFORMANCE SCORE      |       | 10.3   | max=1<br>2 |       | 10.0   | max=1<br>2 |

## Meeting Expectations (Mentor Narratives)

The mentors were asked to respond to the following probe:

**To what extent are the member(s) you mentor failing to meet, meeting, or surpassing your expectations?**

Their responses are presented below by program. They are decidedly positive. There are a few comments pointing to members who lacked initiative or were less reliable than hoped for. Most, however, praise the skillfulness, diligence, inventiveness, and character of those they mentored.

### American Conservation Experience:

I have been greatly impressed by the attitudes, dedication, and performance of all of our AmeriCorps members. Since I was an AmeriCorps member, I feel emotionally invested in guiding and mentoring our members to success. Our organization is known for setting high expectations for all of our members...and that is why we believe ACE has been so successful...because of the work implemented by our members. Our AmeriCorps members possess a strong drive, team-first mindset, and a positive mental attitude. I have been conducting monthly meetings (usually last 30 minutes) with each individual AmeriCorps member in order to address any of their or my concerns/reflections. I have strong evidence to prove that our members are very receptive and responsive to my advice through written "crew leader feedback". I am grateful for our members to take my direction and feedback so seriously. I have seen instant results because our members have taken my advice and our field crew leaders have written about the sudden improvements in performance of our members. It has been really exciting to see the professional



progression and personal growth of each AmeriCorps member...they are simply taking this incredible opportunity and running with it. It has been nothing but an honor and a privilege to help our AmeriCorps members achieve success within our program.

**Area Agency on Aging:**

In most cases they are surpassing expectations. We have our basic criteria or jobs that have to be met, but they are going out of their way to encourage and motivate the people they work with by doing additional interesting activities and taking a personal interest in participants. They get creative with incentives.

**Coconino Rural Environment Corps:**

They are an amazing group of young people for a lot of backgrounds that offer me the chance to learn as much from them as I am able to facilitate their learning through service.

**Communities in Schools of Arizona:**

The members that I mentor have surpassed my expectations. They have built a support system among each other and their schools sites. They have not had any reservations about implementing new programs, assisting with existing programs, and working with their schools sites as needed to bridge the mission of Communities in Schools of Arizona and that of the school they serve. They have also been extremely successful in creating partnerships with other community agencies and identifying resources that will benefit the students at their school sites.

I have had a handful of members who have failed to meet my expectations by suddenly informing me from one day to another that they will no longer be able to complete their term of service. This put CIS in a bad situation with the school in which we have built a good relationship, leaving them without a member that was supposed to be on the campus to assist students. I believe the high turnover is due to the fact that members are not receiving a stipend for service, so when a paying opportunity comes along they forget about our program.

I feel each of my mentors is meeting expectations. They are all engaged and committed to make a difference in the lives of the youth they are serving.

It varies, some members are ready to work based on what they decided to go into and chose as their experience and some more then often feel lost and react to the training process and learning process as overwhelming and often more than what they thought it would be.

**Mesa United Way:**

Our AmeriCorps members are meeting our expectations of assisting staff in providing quality services to our clients. They have exceeded our expectations in the amount of staff time that has been freed up by assistance with phone calls, and day to day office tasks that allow our staff to provide more direct case management services.

To a great extent, they are meeting or surpassing expectations. I am impressed by the members' abilities to cover a wide variety of areas as needed, sometimes above and beyond their job descriptions.

The individuals are doing an awesome job on a daily basis. They go above and beyond to meet the expectations.

**Northern Arizona University:**

All of our members have at least met or exceeded our expectations to date. We have very high standards and expect our AmeriCorps members to be the cream of the crop. Though one member started out slow, he has shown significant progress during the last month.

The young people who come into our program enter a field that is dynamic, risky and unforgiving. Through hard work, training and personnel fortitude, they have all excelled at the tasks given them. When they leave our program, they are equipped with the needed maturity, skills, knowledge and ability to seek future employment and succeed.

Our members are taking on the responsibilities expected of crew members on the Bear Jaw crew. I have been excited about watching them mature as crew members and as individuals.

My AmeriCorps member is by far surpassing my expectations. He has become a staple member of the NAU community. He has gone above and beyond to augment the programs that he is working on within the Office of Sustainability at the university. He has made strides towards becoming a better public speaker, communicating with both students and colleagues, and exhibiting leadership traits.

The members at our site are meeting and in some cases surpassing our expectations. They meet expectations by fulfilling the duties as outlined for their respective positions, and doing so with quality work. They exceed expectations when they develop positive relationships with our artists and clients, thereby strengthening their connection to our organization.

My member has been coached on numerous occasions regarding expectations on project status, whereabouts and deliverables. My member continues to need improvement in these areas.

Our AmeriCorps members are currently meeting the minimum expectations in their role with our organization at this time. We are working to identify additional training to increase the capacity for managing additional tasks. Our members appear to be dedicated to the vision and mission of the organization and have a strong desire to make a difference in our community.

Our Americorps member is surpassing our expectations. It is a key that she has been with our organization for two years.

**Pima Community College:**

The member I mentor is exceeding my expectations. She is reliable, responsible, takes initiative, and fits in very well with our staff. In addition, she is well-educated and has been able to take on higher-level duties than I had originally thought.

One of the members I mentor is moving and growing toward my expectations. I see the learning process is occurring, and there are points where the member shines! The other member is moving along and meeting my expectations or surpassing in particular areas where she is gifted!

Both mentors take initiative in assessing need in the community, connecting with others and taking action to make the community a safer, richer place. They are surpassing my expectations.

Of the members that I have this year, one is surpassing my expectations and the other is learning to meet them. I am extremely happy with the program, the variety and intensity of the training that they give the members, and the support that is available. The beauty of the program is that each member is given a chance to grow and thrive and leaves the program with more skills and experience than when they entered.

I have one member who is very creative and an outstanding piece in our site work. I have another two members who are immature in some other aspects like responsibility and ability to finish projects they volunteer to do. They have unexpected personal problems that take them away from the site and their duties.

The members I mentor are surpassing my expectations. All three of them go above and beyond the call of duty with their work as part of the AmeriCorps team in adult education, and with their work as part of the Civics & Student Leadership team. They get the work done by staying extremely busy, serving adult education at multiple sites across Tucson and fulfilling their duties as part of the AmeriCorps team that has initiated many, many service projects that aren't even a part of their site responsibilities.

#### **The Nature Conservancy:**

Members are meeting expectations. They are accomplishing work on the ground, interacting appropriately with staff, helping out with our public and volunteer constituents. They are handling a variety of tasks without needing too much time to come up to speed. They are effectively adding capacity for us and partners.

The members fulfilled my expectations and sometimes surpassed them. Each brought their unique styles to the work, and each had successes based on their attitudes and skills.

My member is meeting and surpassing expectations. She has been taking a leadership role in mapping and volunteer efforts with Verde Watershed Coalition. She is quick to take up new tasks and following up on tasks.

#### **University of Arizona Wildcat Corps:**

My single member is definitely meeting and in some cases exceeding expectations. She very much has taken the initiative and working with little supervision and getting things done. Very happy with both the quantity and quality of the work she is doing.

He is doing a great job. We all benefit from his skill set that he shares at the farm. He is very organized, professional, and reliable.

The members are surpassing expectations in most areas! We have gotten many comments from teachers saying that this was our best year yet. They are working more and more independently and developing confidence in their teaching abilities.

Our member is surpassing expectations due to his can do attitude, experience and confidence. He has embraced the tasks that he has been assigned and made those tasks his own in a creative and energetic manner.

The member I mentor is a member of the rural community which is the focus on the project. The member assists in various tasks related to developing the community needs assessment. In addition, she offers her personal insights about the rural experience.

She is surpassing my expectations by taking initiative to start projects with minimal direction from me, using her own good judgment to follow through with tasks, and figuring out how to do a task (or figuring out who to ask) if she does not have the immediate knowledge at hand or immediate access to me.

The member I am mentoring meets all expectations by completing tasks in a timely and appropriate manner. He also surpasses expectations in the excellent rapport he has with the teen participants of IT Nation and the excellent command he has of the classroom. He is very professional at all times while being equally approachable and friendly. He himself serves as a mentor for the IT Nation teens.

The only challenge I have encountered this year is with one AmeriCorps member who is pretty laid back and moves much slower than I usually have. However, when I get him in place he is wonderful! Both of my members are surpassing my expectations in their planning for a summer day camp for our 4-Hers. Their ideas and excitement is amazing and I have been very pleased with their planning so far.

Overall our Americorps member meets expectations for our agency. He is extremely pleasant to work with. He has helped us standardize our communications with our constituents and serves as an extra pair of hands when we need to provide direct service to community members. He often hesitates to take on new tasks that involve working directly with the public, even when training and mentorship opportunities are provided. However, despite the hesitation, he does a wonderful job once he jumps in.

My member has met and exceeded all of my expectations. She is highly productive in all areas of her work--from research and curriculum development to meeting with the community and working in the garden.

Two of the members I mentor are meeting our expectations, while the third member is surpassing our expectations. The first two have done everything that was asked of them, while the third has gone above and beyond what was asked of her. She has been proactive and truly engaged in the mission of the organization, helping strengthen our ties in the community, while contributing to our objectives in ways that we hadn't even thought of.

**Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona:**

Our members are meeting our expectations in terms of their willingness to be involved with youth and their desire to serve others. Our members are exceeding our expectations in terms of initiative to take on new tasks.

Most of my AmeriCorps members have met my expectations. While I have high standards, many members have surpassed the expectations of their positions. Some members have taken extraordinary initiative to improve processes, strategies, and customer service. Others seem to be happy just doing the bare minimum necessary.

The member continues to work hard both on her own and as a team member. She has developed the Youth Coalition program and is starting to see a positive change and growth with this program

Our AmeriCorps member is exceeding our expectations. She is willing to take on any challenge and has great interpersonal skills.

Our members are doing a great job at meeting our Council's expectations. They are spreading their passion in the community through work with low income and at-risk girls. They are mentoring them in outdoor education, service learning, life skills, and most importantly leadership.

My member is fully meeting my expectations. She has been reliably punctual and dependably engaged. She has taken her responsibilities to heart, and has worked earnestly toward success. She works well with other people, including youth. She is cheerful and honest. She has assisted with a variety of projects in different ways.

Our members help us take production at the farm to the next level. Having extra hands on deck really helps us maintain our level of production and get the work done. They have exceeded our expectations in every way. They bring a lot to our team.

## **Making a Difference (Member Narratives)**

The members were asked to respond to the following probe:

### **What difference have you made?**

Their responses are presented below by program. Their accomplishments span a wide range of result, both within and across programs.

#### **American Conservation Experience:**

In Imperial I helped create a new trail that will show visitors a different environment than what the already existing trails go through. I have also helped improve the South Kaibab trail in the Grand Canyon. One of the Park Service people said we got a whole season of work done in just one hitch. Many of the hikers thanked us for our work. In Apache we are starting a project to protect Mexican Spotted Owl (a threatened species) habitat which consists of Douglas fir and spruce trees.

Each and every project I have been involved with has made a difference: whether I was creating fencing to protect delicate soils from trampling, eradicating invasive plant species to improve native species' survival or simply renovating trails so others could see the beauty of nature...It has all been thoroughly worthwhile.

The work we have been doing on trails will encourage their use and also prevent people from straying from the trail and destroying delicate ecosystems. Also, I have helped many international volunteers learn new skills and appreciate some of America's best natural resources.

I've had the chance to make a positive impact on the environment while interacting with and educating international volunteers about the conservation movement in the U.S.

I think I have provided a good amount of leadership and really helped out my crew leaders before and during projects. I think I promote a fun project atmosphere and provide strong leadership as a housing supervisor.

So far my favorite projects were the back country trail work in the Coronation NF and the invasive species removal at Lake Mojave (chain sawing Tamarisk). I find these projects rewarding because they involve hard work and challenging situations that most people would never want to be in. And I get to do it for work!

I think I enjoyed the fencing project most because I felt like I was really coming into my own as a leader on crews. The crew leader and I have worked together many times previously so he was able to trust me in decision making and supervision. He was able to run out to get more supplies while I managed the crew and felt completely comfortable doing so, which I appreciated.

The most challenging project was the chainsaw work in Cibola. It was the most physically demanding and was in pretty warm weather. I learned a lot from this project and was able to practice a lot on my chain sawing skills and safety. The most enjoyable project is the fish hatchery. We get to wade around murky muddy ponds netting and catching fish with our hands. We also receive a daily "education hour" to learn about the history of fish and game operations, certain fishing/netting techniques, and tracking/data collecting techniques.

At this point I feel the Apache Sitgreaves project I am currently working on has been and will be the most challenging experience within ACE. This project is unlike any other project I have worked on in my eight months with ACE. The crew's first four days of the project were specifically dedicated to training by Apache Forest Service staff, Mexican Spotted Owl Biologists, and by an entomologist. Our crew participated in lectures, tree identification, pace practice, pheromone handling, polygon work with GPS, and staple practice using pace and compass navigation. This is a very detail oriented, scientific project that will rely heavily on quality and leadership from the AmeriCorps PDM's.

### **American Red Cross:**

Over the last year with Americorps I have helped 150+ veterans, service members, or family members to become gainfully employed. I have also designed programs and classes to give them resume and interview skills and provide valuable professional development information.

I have assisted clients who may otherwise not have received help on a variety of needs.

This is an unquantifiable question. Our numbers and recognition within the community continue to climb.

As well as providing resources, we give them moral support and a road map to recovering.

I feel like I have made a small difference in some of the mentees and mentors lives. I always make myself available to talk so I have really gotten to know some of them more than others and I enjoy talking with them.

As this time, I have been able to recruit several dozen volunteers to assist at the events. I have also been able to help at SAF events across Pima County, trying to make a difference to the best of my ability. However, I am still waiting for my main position to open up at DM AFB.

I have assisted veterans and survivors in applying for VA benefits

By having the knowledge of the community's services, I have been able to direct clients to the right service the first time.

I have spread the word about the services about what the Southern Arizona Red Cross does for our armed forces.

Just letting the community/veterans and their families know that I'm out here and available.

**Area Agency on Aging:**

Because my agency is non-profit, we are on a very limited budget. Since I am in the office three days a week, I can help the agency serve more people than might be possible without my assistance. I make it possible for other staff members to complete their work in a timely manner. More importantly, I am often the first face that new clients see and greet and I think that I am helping to alleviate their fears about asking for help. I let them know how valuable they are and that we will work our hardest to give them the assistance that they need to remain independent.

Several participants are losing weight--two have lost twenty pounds since the program started three months ago. It is hard to generalize, due to aging-related conditions, but most of the participants have graduated to heavier weights and stronger resistance bands

The seniors get very excited when it is time for exercise and are always telling me how much the exercise program is helping them they also feel better than they use too.

My clients are very pleased with the way I help them and listen to them. I try to make their outings enjoyable.

Unconditional care and comforting to those I serve. I am an additional resource to the Faith Community, providing them with resources to assist in ministering to the total person. What a blessing!

I've been able to share a moment with vulnerable seniors and possibly given them a small reason for hope and a chance to believe that someone cares about them.

People understand that you are here with the information that will help them become a more empowered consumer, who can achieve things that life as to offer.

Extended a friendly hand to those in need, and enabled them to have a smile on their face that they may not have not had, not having someone in their lives.

I have suggested help for homebound seniors with some of their problems. I have made it possible for cancer patients to get their treatments, labs and get to their doctor appointments. I have helped patients get nutrition information.

**Arts for All:**

I leave my AmeriCorps job every day with a smile on my face, as there is always an enjoyable experience. There are plenty of challenges as well, but I enjoy taking these on as something positive always results from doing so. One great experience in the past few months has been working with a participant who chooses not to speak. I have been working one-on-one with her frequently in wheel throwing and art classes, and have definitely noticed a connection forming between her and me. One day during a wheel throwing class, she got so excited about what we were working on and spoke several sentences to me. She speaks so infrequently, and this was the first time I had ever heard her voice- it sent chills through my



body! I felt like a breakthrough had been made. It was one of the moments to really remind me how much my service affects those I work with.

I feel that I have made a difference here at Arts for All especially in the physical therapy exercise class that we hold everyday Monday-Thursday at 11am. I feel like most of the participants trust me and have no problem asking me for help when needed

I have helped adults with developmental disabilities learn to achieve greater agency in their lives and advocate for themselves, using the framework of visual arts education.

### **Coconino Rural Environment Corps:**

Repaired and maintained countless hand tools, shared knowledge gained with other crew members, helped to keep daily and weekly operations functional, and problem solved.

The better maintained trails are, the more they're used and the less other wilderness areas are trespassed upon, so the difference I've had a piece in is to sustain the wild!

The difference I make as a trail worker is a hard one to measure; and one that can often be misplaced in all the hard work. This being said, every time a hiker, equestrian, or biker passes my crew on the trail, gives thanks, or compliments our work I remember what the difference I make is; as a trail worker, it is my job to enable people to enjoy the outdoors. Every structure my crew builds on the trail ensures that another generation of people will be able to enjoy the same beauty we do working in the outdoors every day. The small difference of knowing that a trail will still be a trail long after I am gone is the difference that CREC gives back to the community.

I feel I have contributed both in hard work and spirit to my crew. We've done a lot of good work on the trails--maintaining them, building them, and clearing them--to make them more accessible to the public.

I have a great time in Americorps. I have improved countless trails in my time. However the biggest difference I have made is in myself. I have a lot more job skills, more than I would have gained through any college.

### **Communities in Schools of Arizona:**

I have started a tutoring program at my school for students in 2nd-5th grade that are struggling with math and reading skills. I worked with a local high school to bring in students to volunteer twice a week in the tutoring program. The program is successful and the principal would like to continue the program next year and reach out to other local high schools

I have made a difference in working with American Dream Academy parents and students through an ASU grant to educate parents about getting their students to college and setting them up for success. It was a great accomplishment for these parents to "graduate" from this program. It was also great to have their students join in and celebrate their success with them.

I have had the opportunity to provide some students with the tools and resources to feel comfortable seeking college-bound opportunities.

I believe I have made a huge difference with these youth who were struggling with their grades and attitude about school. Now these youth are improving in their grades and attitude about school.

I have done volunteer coordinating for my school which has been a HUGE need. Another need addressed was for clubs. We now have a Chess Club, Lego Club and are planning on carrying over an Art Club to begin next year. Along with being a support to the school I have attempted to reach students in need. One example is of a family who had a fire soon after Christmas and lost all of their belongings. I was able to gain donations for food, clothing and one queen and one full sized bed for the family. Through this tragedy, I thought a Care Closet may be a good thing for my school to have. After speaking with the school nurse, I realized that she has a great need for hygiene products and clothing for students who do not have these items available. Through discussions with the principal, we have decided a care closet would be invaluable to my school. My goal is to get it started prior to the end of the school year. I have helped gain donations from community members for field trips, and parental involvement events such as "pastries for parents". I have assisted the PTO with their fundraising efforts. My team and I have also applied for, and received a grant. With the grant we decided to partner with "Seeds of Hope" and improve their community garden; and with the grant money we purchased compost bins, plants, and paint to refurbish structures inside the garden.

Approximately 400 students have received services in the tutoring program I coordinate. As a result, the overall AIMS testing results were higher, and grades and school retention have improved.

I've exposed students to various activities that they would have never encountered if it wasn't for the program.

#### **Mesa United Way:**

I was the site coordinator for a site that prepared over 600 federal returns for low income persons. In addition I helped the other volunteers with tax questions, software questions, and making sure we had sufficient staffing each day.

I always feel that working with foster children is making a difference to them. Some kids come in and are sad, confused etc. By working with them while picking out clothing they start to open up and even smile.

I think that I made a difference at the agency by bringing my friendly personality, being able to give support to the staff in many areas and shared my experiences working with people for many years from all types of backgrounds.

Many of the people I assist have very low level computer/technology skills. I have helped them initiate and carry out their job searches. They are often surprised to see the skills they do have when their resume is done, and though they may not always recognize it, their computer skills increase as they utilize them for job search.

I want the kids to feel special when they come to Helen's Hope Chest. I have lots of stories and I could go on and on. This is a very valuable program not only for the clothing and supplies we provide but also for the emotional support and love we offer to these kids and parents.

**Northern Arizona University:**

All of the students participating in our food-related, action research training come together on the agreed-upon projects, thereby committing to planning, action, and follow-through. I hope I have made a difference in how these young adults approach a future situation, and they can draw upon some of the skills they learned.

I have introduced children to concepts about the environment that they may not have learned otherwise in their classroom.

I have worked with the crew to thin 10 acres of private land within the Summit and Highlands fire districts.

I feel that recruiting and working with volunteers has made a huge difference in my organization. These volunteers have worked in a variety of assignments that have helped further the mission and goals of my site. I have improved or developed several programs and materials that will help the organization in the future. The organization is running much more smoothly and efficiently than when I started.

I've been able to organize multiple volunteer events throughout the community that aimed at helping those organizations or citizens in need.

I have organized art exhibitions and engaged in youth art education at Flagstaff Cultural Partners. All of our exhibitions are free to the public, providing a space for people of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds to come and enjoy art. Our staff is very small and would not be able to provide the programs we offer if it were not for AmeriCorps positions. I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to serve in this capacity and help Flagstaff Cultural Partners achieve their mission.

I have inspired people with a love and respect for the Colorado Plateau and its peoples.

I think my biggest impact here in the last few months was with the nominees for the Viola Awards. I had the incredible opportunity to work alongside artists in promoting the awards and preparing them for the fun event.

I have educated people in rural communities on child abuse prevention

A lot of the college age groups I have worked with are students that are new to the idea of conservation. I hope I have sparked an interest in conservation not only on a landscape scale but also on a day-day lifestyle scale as well (such as reduce, reuse, recycle, and bicycle). I hope that I have made a difference in the volunteers' perspective of the natural world around them.

I feel the difference I have made is that the children know that someone cares about them and not just about their academics. In some children I see the difference being that they will talk to me about themselves and share their life. I also see the work time being much more focused and productive.

I am able to help Navajo speakers understand their work applications better. By communicating to them in their own language, I can connect with them on a different level.

The biggest difference that I've made is through my tutoring. I have helped several students improve their math, reading comprehension, and writing skills to the point where they feel more confident in themselves and their academic abilities. I was also one of about ten volunteers with the first trial of Alternative Break. It was a success and I hope it will become an annual tradition.

Working in the One Stop employment program as a career specialist, I have helped customers search for job opportunities, apply for employment, and create suitable resumes.

### **Pima Community College:**

I know that I have made a significant difference in many of my students' lives. They are beginning to read, whereas before they did not know the English alphabet, and could not speak, read or write a single word in English. Some of my pre-literacy students had never held a pencil and can now read. Several of them have accompanied me on several community outreach and service projects so that they feel like they are giving back to the communities that have helped them since they arrived in the United States.

One of the students I tutor was named AALL (Arizona Association of Life-Long Learners) Student of the Year and Inducted into the Arizona Adult Education Honor Society!

I have seen a little 4 year old up to parents of the age 50 push to become more educated. Learning English and going to school is not a challenge for them, but a desire now.

The difference I have made is by keeping our community safe and clean by volunteering with organizations that help keep our community clean. In addition, I have helped tutor students who are having difficulty understanding a subject whether it is Math or Writing.

Because I have participated in the RPTC lectures, I have helped other mothers understand the importance of literacy and reading to your child.

I make connections with the students that I am helping that allows them to show me where they need help so I may better their skills—and also mine.

### **The Nature Conservancy:**

I helped reduce the fuel load, a little bit, in Ramsey Canyon so that if a fire comes through it will be less catastrophic. I hopefully helped the frogs that were released at Ramsey Canyon. I have told a number of people about volunteering for the AZ Project WET program, and I have represented AmeriCorps and the Nature Conservancy well.

Removing invasive species, not to mention cows, can have a large impact on raising the water table of an area. For San Pedro River Preserve and Aravaipa Canyon Preserve, that means that the water will be above ground more and therefore plants and animals will have an easier time accessing it. The saplings and grasses we planted will have a lasting impact and create a healthy ecosystem that will become resistant to encroachment by invasive species all on its own. At Ramsey Canyon Preserve, we worked to remove dead logs and branches so that if a wildfire reaches the canyon it would have less fuel to burn and hopefully save the visitors center.

I like to think I am helping people know more about some of these endangered species populations and habitats.

#### **University of Arizona Wildcat Corps:**

All of the events and projects I have worked have had or will have direct impact on health facilities, or the encouragement of health activity for residents.

I have helped some 4-H clubs learn about leadership and parliamentary procedures.

I have had an impact working with the elementary children; teaching them about 4-H and being a helping hand.

I have expanded knowledge and capacity building of Well-Being Promoters, and health promotion and health literacy for newly arrived refugees.

I have offered support and services in the field of community literacy and I have contributed to the efforts of developing and training community members who desire further education and improved literacy.

I have made a significant difference in our community. We opened and sustained a community center that has become the after-school home for many families.

I have established groundwork and connections for farm to school in the future.

#### **Volunteer Center for Southern Arizona:**

I have engaged youth in weekend service projects and Semester of Service. I have also helped plan Global Youth Service Day.

I think I have reached some hearts of youth! They have participated in much more than I ever expected. It's very rewarding.

I have worked on several large-scale projects this month, and that has really allowed me to see the impact of the role that I've played. I feel like I am an integral part of the team and without everyone's involvement the events would not have been as successful. I have enabled youth to serve their communities in so many different types of ways -- from animals, to environment, to the elderly, to their peers.

I have been able to help students prepare for academic success while readying them for graduation requirements. I work closely with the Special Education students and ensure all their accommodations have been met to the best of my ability.

I have served as a role model for youth volunteers and helped beautify an elementary school and a community food bank with native plants. I helped increase access to arable land for community members and helped plant roughly 1/2 acre in vegetables for the community Food Bank's farmer's markets. Finally, I've had the opportunity to share some of my knowledge and enthusiasm of the Sonoran desert and gardening with youth across Tucson.

I have provided opportunities to youth to volunteer and give back in their community. I have provided volunteers to community partners who need them.

According to the Director of the Marana Community Food Bank, our service project made a difference to all those who are serviced at the Marana Food Bank. I have also received positive feedback from parents of children who have toured the farm. I think I have helped normalize the presence of farms and farmers so that children begin to see farming as a possible future for them.

This month I had the opportunity to serve more time with youth. I feel that this was very important to their lives and of my own, being a positive role model.

I hope that I have improved the food security of our community by growing local, fresh, affordable food and helping community members to learn about hunger issues and practice growing their own food.

Miniscule ones that seem silly when said out loud but feel so different when experiencing them.

I have empowered my Semester of Service students to speak out against bullying and to encourage kindness. I have also empowered the Youth Advisory Council to plan its own project.

I've been recruited many students to participate in YVC projects and their own service. When I get to see the smiles on their faces as they help out their communities I feel accomplished. I hope this service will foster a lifelong love for civic engagement and helping people.

I feel like I've built relationships with students, educated people about GYSD and AmeriCorps, and I've actually done things with tangible results (gardening/making blankets, decorating light switch plates, running workshops, chaperoning, etc.)

I have got more communities and students active in the coalition, and provided constructive things for them to do. Also by working with the probation youth I have been able to help educate them on different issues related to pregnancy prevention, healthy relationships, values, goals and tobacco use dangers. I have also made an impact by working with them and getting them excited about the garden and having a positive impact on their community.

I have taught youth about animals, conservation and the environment, giving them a better understanding of how to live in harmony with the planet and conserve resources. I have gotten youth interested in service learning.

**Yavapai County Community Counts:**

As Volunteer Coordinator at the women's shelter, my role includes effectively scheduling the necessary volunteers to cover each shift, as well as procuring donated meals every night. My position allows volunteers to have a set point person for support or questions. Before my service here, the shelter had not had a volunteer training meeting in more than 6 months.

I have taught new skills to girls and adults. I have been a role model and support system to staff members, girls, and adult volunteers. I have expressed and shared my ideas. Lastly, I have found new community partners to collaborate with for future endeavors.

I have built curriculum and stability at the CV site Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. Our acting-out children have stopped and have expressed their pleasure with the program. One boy who was threatening staff and students has been playing nicely with his peers and being respectful of staff. He even ran up to me and gave me a big hug the other day. He laughs and smiles while playing, and seems to be enjoying himself.

The differences that I am told I have made are many - between juggling performances, technical theatre, directing, producing, organizing Team Tech and the Young Playwrights Festival in the past 90 days, there have been many individual and group achievements of which I've been a part.

Multiple students thanked me saying that if it hadn't been for the Priceless Prom Project they would not have been able to attend the prom. Many parents and students are facing financial hardships and prom isn't cheap. My site and I have worked hard to make sure that everyone and anyone can attend the prom.

I helped make the store work much more efficiently by working to drive donations through offering free pickups, and sales by doing free deliveries.

I have developed another site to add to the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program as well as increased the numbers of matched children at each of the other existing sites. I have started to plan summer programs as well to help keep matches connected over the long summer break.

I am the volunteer coordinator at the school, working with current volunteers as well as recruiting new ones. More volunteers are coming on board with every call!!

## **Better Sense of Future (Member Narratives)**

The members were asked to respond to the following probe:

**In what ways have your recent AmeriCorps experiences changed how you see yourself? How have these experiences changed what you see yourself doing in the future?**

Their responses are presented below by program. There is rich evidence of both personal and professional growth. Members leave the program with a much clearer sense for what they next want to accomplish. In some cases, this represents confirmation of a vision already in place when they began their AmeriCorps service; in other cases, new avenues have opened for them.

### **American Conservation Experience:**

I can see myself becoming someone that other people would think of as outdoorsy. I have never felt that way before. But I am learning so many new back country skills and becoming more and more comfortable out in the woods. I can no longer see myself living in a place where nature is inaccessible, it would kill me. More than anything I have developed an even greater love for nature and the outdoors.

I would like to continue to work with ACE and my experience with AmeriCorps will have perfectly prepared myself for a higher leadership role within this organization.

There are a few other AmeriCorps opportunities on the East coast in North Carolina I am interested in. I would like to pursue a long-term job with a non-profit organization and learn more about what goes on behind doors.

I still strongly desire to become a river guide. I want to lead and educate people about the outdoors of wherever I may end up. ACE is providing me with leadership roles that have me organizing and working efficiently with American and International volunteers. I also get practice communicating and helping project partners and supervisors. These are just a few key skills that make a successful leader for any job I decide to take after ACE.

I have really enjoyed the work I have done with ACE. When I first started I thought I would only be doing this kind of work for a little while, but now I can see myself staying in this field for longer.

Confidence in my own decision-making and leadership skills has grown extensively. Working for AmeriCorps has opened my mind to new careers that I could excel at AND love.

This experience has definitely improved my leadership skills and confidence. I see myself taking more leadership roles in the future.

They have helped me focus on what I want to accomplish and how I can best apply my skill set to new situations and get the most out of new experiences. These experiences have helped me narrow a focus on what I would like to pursue in the future and have provided me with the skills to make it happen.



**American Red Cross:**

I am more confident in myself and my speaking ability, and other abilities. These experiences will help me in future endeavors to show that confidence and be a better instructor, more confident in speaking to people, and better at networking and attaining my own job.

At this time, I do not feel like I have been overly changed by the AmeriCorps. I have always been patriotic and I have always had a sense to serve my community. AmeriCorps enhances this drive in me and makes me continue to excel.

One thing I am learning is effective time management and in relating to other members on a more motivational level to complete objectives.

These experiences have shown me that I need to go back to school and take some public speaking classes. I need to gain more confidence in myself.

I don't see myself any differently than before. My visions of what I will be doing in the future also, have not changed very much. But, the skills I am gaining here are being further refined and fortified.

**Area Agency on Aging:**

These experiences have humbled me and given me greater insight into what it means to be a "suffering servant." It has allowed me the opportunity to say "thank you" to my Mom and Grand Mom for the sacrifices made. Thank you.

I now see my own mortality in ways that I had never thought about before. I have also seen first-hand the courage and strength that others bring to the aging experience.

I find I enjoy helping the elderly and want to continue in the social work field.

I have learned that caring for elders is something that I can do. I didn't think I had the patience before.

I feel much more useful now than I have in many years.

I see myself as a person that took for granted a lot of everyday things that a lot of people don't have. I hope in the future that I take the time to look with my heart and not with a blank look at the plight of others

My AmeriCorps experience has chastened me. I am able to look at myself and realize I can make a difference in someone's life and recognize that I really enjoy giving back. I have been helped along the way by so many people, just to be able to return that is truly life changing. The experience has caused me to step out of myself and look at the bigger picture. Because of my experiences with AmeriCorps I am considering joining the Peace Corps.

These experiences have given me more confidence in losing weight. I can reinforce the sense of accomplishment that others feel as they also lose weight and lower blood-pressure scores.

**Arts for All:**

My experiences with providing visual art education to an under-served population have kindled my interest in teaching art professionally.

I see myself doing another year of AmeriCorps. I get so much enjoyment out of every day that I sometimes don't realize I am working 12+ hours. I feel I still have a lot to learn from the program I am volunteering at and would love to spend another year learning and growing in this inclusive arts environment.

During my AmeriCorps experience I think that I have become a much more patient person as well as understanding. During this experience, I have also decided on a career path different than I previously thought that I would be doing, which hopefully will lead to many open doors in my future.

This term has completely changed my view of where I stand in the future. This service term has shown me that I really want to evolve as a physical therapist and continue working as such.

My experiences with providing visual art education to an under-served population have kindled my interest in teaching art professionally.

**Coconino Rural Environment Corps:**

I know I want to work with my hands. That's the one thing that really sticks about this job. Because of this I no longer see myself as part of the academic crowd. I don't want my job to be in my head. I want it to be tangible!

It has given me the opportunity to put myself out there in new situations, meeting new people, and working on new things. I think that in the future I want to try something different after experiencing this.

Every time I leave the field, I feel like I have changed. I can't put a description to it, but the change is there. Being able to slow down from the fast pace of modern society and spend time in the wilderness enables the mind to roam as it would without distraction. This is by far the most important change that takes place every time I go into the field. Perhaps someday one of my wilderness thoughts will lead me to my career, perchance to a forgotten goal, or maybe to my future home. But one thing is certain; they always bring happiness and wonder.

**Communities in Schools of Arizona:**

I see myself as a positive role model to others especially the youth. I realized that my past successes and bad choices play a big role in how I am able to relate and tell my story to the youth. I see myself being more involved with youth in creating positive change in their lives.

I now see myself as being very capable of achieving goals. When I first began, it was difficult to integrate myself with the school but now I am very capable of getting things done and am comfortable enough with the staff that I can do my job well without feeling like an outsider.

I have learned that everyone can make a difference, one child at a time. I have learned that school is sometimes the best thing going on in a child's life and this should be remembered every day and I have learned to value teachers, the aides, the school nurse and everyone in the school community who all work together to make sure each child is successful. I will use my stipend to complete my teaching certificate and improve my computer skills.

I feel like I have become more socially aware and I see myself becoming more involved in nonprofit organizations in the future.

**Mesa United Way:**

I have gained a sense of giving back to my community, of "each one, teach one" in practice! I will continue to find ways to be involved in my community, and won't be afraid to try something new. I also find myself encouraging others to engage in new activities, work, etc. Enthusiasm is contagious!

I find that I am able to handle any situation and am willing to participate in any project that is thrown my way.

I have gained the awareness that at any stage in my life, I am able to change if I am willing to be open-minded.

I have gained more confidence in myself as a writer and an editor. I have learned how to work more effectively in group situations. In the future I wish to teach higher education; working here has given me confidence in my ability to do that.

I feel like I am contributing to those who need help most. I want to stay with the same organization because I can see lots that still need to be done. We are going to expand more and more.

**Northern Arizona University:**

My experience working through AmeriCorps at Flagstaff Cultural Partners has fundamentally changed me and my goals for the future. I never worked in Marketing or in the Arts before this job, and now I can't imagine doing anything different. Having the important role of promoting hard-working, generous, determined, and passionate artists has changed my perspective on art and the way it enhances community, culture, and the quality of life.

I never thought of myself as the kind of person who would make a good tutor. I was always afraid I wouldn't have the patience or that the students wouldn't feel comfortable around me. However, this past year of tutoring has allowed me to become more confident in myself and help the kids gain confidence too. With regards to the Alternative Break, it took me out of my comfort zone and I loved it. Instead of spending Spring Break with my family and friends in Phoenix, I stayed in Flagstaff and made new friends and helped other families. It has made me want to continue volunteering no matter where I am.

My recent AmeriCorps experiences changed how I see myself in that I knew I was willing to give space to other people to step up, but I was still nervous and wanted to take control of the situation.

I have learned that I love working with and teaching children. This has been my first real opportunity to work extensively with kids in a traditional classroom setting.

I have so many interests and passions that I have always found it difficult to focus on any one thing. Serving at this site in AmeriCorps has given me some direction. I've learned that I really love working in a non-profit. I feel that though many corporations/private companies do good and worthy things and create great products, I like the more hands-on, direct methods of helping.

I've noticed just how independent and responsible I am. I've been given so much freedom to plan what I want and how I want, and all events have been pretty successful. It's been a great chance to realize that I have the power to do a lot on my own!

These experiences have helped change how I see myself in one way in particular. After visiting the Navajo Nation and working with a non-profit conservation organization, the Grand Canyon Trust, I see myself as not so jaded of an environmentalist. After finishing my undergraduate degree in Environmental Science I felt hopeless once I learned how badly we have over-exploited our resources. Now that I work with optimistic conservationists whose jobs are to create on-the-ground change through political pressure and hands on field work, I have hope for my generation and the next. We can change perspectives even if it is one person at a time.

I see myself as a person who is not selfish. Before, I used to volunteer here and there. But after working with AmeriCorps and United Way, I have become more aware of situations around my community and I try to give a hand the best way I know.

### **Pima Community College:**

I see myself as an educator. Before I would never imagine that I could teach others.

Before AmeriCorps I never enjoyed volunteering as much as I do now. I love working with people the most. The things and experiences I have lived in this program are a real eye opener. I have become a better person for the future.

The most recent AmeriCorps experiences have made me changed how I see my future. These experiences have made me see what I want to do with my life and career. For instance, it has made me see myself becoming a leader in my community. Also, it has made me think of being involved with an organization or a charity that not only helps homeless children get off the streets and into a better home, but also into a better future. Furthermore, I want to open a clinic for which low income families could take their children if they are ill.

All these recent experiences in AmeriCorps have changed the way I see myself. I feel that I am more capable of being successful in any of my goals and feel that I have confidence in me.

My experiences in AmeriCorps have changed my personal life. Now I know I'm ready to face any challenge in my life, so in my future I'm ready for anything that my community needs

**The Nature Conservancy:**

I worked for 4 years in a law office, and I dreaded getting out of bed for work. Now, I can't wait to get up and start working. I love my job, I have a real sense of meaning and fulfillment, and I know that I will not go back to doing something I hate just for a paycheck. I hope to be able to find full time, permanent work with a nonprofit, preferably a conservation-related nonprofit, because that is what I love most.

Luckily I wanted to do this sort of thing before I applied and now I'm sure I want to do it, I simply recognize now that a physical lifestyle requires you to keep your body healthy.

**University of Arizona Wildcat Corps:**

I see myself continuing to work in community literacy and development. AmeriCorps has helped to prepare me for this as I have a lot of freedom at my site to develop literacy materials and projects. This freedom has allowed me to try out new ideas and talk to students about what works and what doesn't. It's been a great learning experience.

I am planning on working in the medical field when I am done with Americorps. I think that my recent experience of volunteering with refugees has prepared me to work with cultural diverse backgrounds in my field and has inspired me to focus on their needs.

After AmeriCorps I would like to find a position at a refugee resettlement agency, therefore my AmeriCorps assignment is preparing me well for that. I am gaining experience and skills that will directly transfer into my future career.

I am currently planning on entering the Peace Corps after graduation. AmeriCorps has prepared me for this position by demonstrating the value of service and the importance of interacting with the community as well as effective outreach and development techniques.

What I really want to get involved with is a Vista program working on sustainable economic development and social capital. I figured that working for Americorps would help me in finding a position with Vista, and I do believe it has helped me by introducing me to the bureaucracies and hierarchies of the work place.

I will be looking for a teaching job. I actually would like to work in a school with a large refugee population, so this experience has directly affected my career path.

I am leaving for English Teaching with the Peace Corps in July. Americorps has definitely given me classroom management and leadership skills for this assignment.

After AmeriCorps I plan to work for a non-profit or government social services agency before applying to law school for Immigration Law. My experience in AmeriCorps has not only prepared me for future in Immigration Law for refugees/asylees, it is also the reason I became interested in that specific type of

law. My AmeriCorps experience has improved my leadership skills, patience, and work ethic. Furthermore, it has developed my great cross cultural communication skills, professionalism, and passion.

I will be looking for a teaching job. I actually would like to work in a school with a large refugee population, so this experience has directly affected my career path.

I am leaving for English Teaching with the Peace Corps in July. Americorps has definitely given me classroom management and leadership skills for this assignment.

I hope to continue working with Iskashitaa Refugee Network and help coordinate its future growth. I also plan to apply to graduate school to pursue a master's degree in global health.

I see myself pursuing a degree in counseling, psychology or psychiatry, and applying this in an experiential education setting. The work I have done as an AmeriCorps has helped me discover my passion for teaching, counseling, and environmental stewardship.

I plan to start a business working with challenging children. AmeriCorps has increased my confidence and leadership skills.

After AmeriCorps, I plan on finding another job that will be just as rewarding as my current position as an AmeriCorps volunteer. My position as an AmeriCorps volunteer has been doing nothing but prepare me for the future. I've learned so much from this experience, and I feel prepared for anything that comes my way.

When I look back at the past months, I see how much I have done for others and how much my work means to others. I would like to continue volunteering in any way that I can.

It has been a challenge to see that home is just like abroad. We have a lot of work to do in order to bring equity to our country. It has helped me to see a different side of education that exists outside of the classroom.

I could consider working in the elementary school system, which I did not consider seriously beforehand.

#### **Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona:**

I have had the opportunity to meet with various people and increase my own skill set. I now am aware of different opportunities that wait for me outside of my AmeriCorps assignment. Without this initial experience, I would not have been ready.

I have been surprised at how many skills I already possess and happy to expand in areas that I had previously avoided. I also have a much better understanding of service organizations. I think I am now considering options for my future that I dismissed in the past.

I feel more confident in my problem solving and planning abilities. Although my goals of attending graduate school have remained the same, I now feel so much more prepared to take on challenges in the future.

I have seen myself as a more capable, trustworthy person. I think I am more capable now of leading and planning large events. I also think that I have a unique set of skills that allow girls in need to open up to me very quickly.

I think I might really like teaching. Being in front of a classroom and with youth all the time has maybe made me think that. Of course, I've been thinking about teaching for a while, but now maybe I am less on the fence.

My experiences through AmeriCorps are helping me see myself more and more as a farmer and educator. Through working on the farm, I have learned that I want my future career to combine both teaching and farm work. I have learned that just one or just the other is only half of what I want to be involved with in my daily future life.

By working as an AmeriCorps volunteer, I am able to work, learn, and live in a community that shares my passion for food justice. I have become comfortable with this knowledge about myself and hope to bring it with me wherever my future takes me.

My experiences have made me realize that I am willing to work hard for something that I care about, but the problem with that is that I can't turn it off, which can be draining. I also have learned that while I do appreciate having a variety of things to work on, too much is frustrating. This has helped me realize what my work style is and to put a higher priority on that aspect when looking for my next position.

When I was a little kid I wanted to change the world. I wanted to help people and just make a difference in someone's life. My last five months in AmeriCorps have helped me realize I am making my dream come true. I AM making a difference. This has helped me see myself in a better life, I'm not a failure and I am making a change. My experiences the last few months have helped me realize my future is really bright.

This experience has really confirmed that I am in the right field and that working with animals and children is really where I want to be rather than in the research field.

#### **Yavapai County Community Counts:**

I have known for a long time that I want to be a teacher. I have strong presentation skills and often can think of various ways to explain complex instructions. My work at the Willow Springs Center has continued to strengthen these skills and passions. Further, I feel I can now articulate my beliefs in experiential learning, nature-based education, and the importance of creating a culture of teamwork amongst youth.

I have had a lot of experience working in direct service with the homeless, but this is the first time my role has been focused on the engaging volunteers within the shelter. I've grown to view myself as a resource for new volunteers who are not accustomed to working with this population.

I can now see myself going into being a camp director and I have an idea of where I want to be in the world. I have also learned a lot about relational aggression and how it affects every girl.

AmeriCorps has provided me a sense of confidence unmatched at any other time in my life.

I plan to stay at the CCJ Thrift Shop after my AmeriCorps service commitment is completed. I would never have thought that I would be working at a thrift shop, but being able to help people is so rewarding that I want to continue doing it.

AmeriCorps has recently showed me more how to be in a more professional field. While I really enjoy this, it has shown me things that I absolutely love and things I would like to not be a part of my future professional experience.

I see myself as being able to accomplish more than I thought I could. I will be more inclined to take more chances where a difference can be made.



## **Better Sense of Future (Mentor Narratives)**

The mentors were asked to respond to the following probe:

**Do you see evidence the member(s) are seeing themselves or the future differently as a direct result of the AmeriCorps experience?**

Their responses are presented below by program. They echo the previous responses of the members.

### **American Conservation Experience:**

It is obvious to see the overall personal and professional progression of each AmeriCorps member. Our members understand that this is an incredible opportunity for them to prepare and train for a future career related to the environment. Some of our members are initially shy and keep to themselves. However, after a couple months as an ACE AmeriCorps member, our members soon "come out of their shells" and act as future crew leaders. Our AmeriCorps members are constantly looking for ways to improve their performance and are comfortable with getting out of their "comfort zones" in order to challenge themselves. The ACE AmeriCorps position gives our members the "hard" and "soft" skills required to become leaders in land stewardship and conservation.

### **Area Agency on Aging:**

One member shared that this experience with our agency has put her in a place of fulfillment and joy.

In some cases they were doing nothing before joining AmeriCorps. Now they have had training, new skills, gained confidence, and are seeing themselves in a whole new positive light.

### **Coconino Rural Environmental Corps:**

Yes, they see themselves differently in terms of the stewardship of their public lands, their interest in attending college, or in determining what they want to do with their lives.

### **Communities in Schools of Arizona:**

Yes I do because they are invested in the current community and school site they serve. Two of my members would like to return for a second term because they want to continue to work at their school sites and see their current programs through another year.

Definitely! Through conversations and regularly evaluations, many members have reported a change in their choice of career. They feel this experience has really helped them gain a purpose and focus.

### **Mesa United Way:**

The member would be a grumpy old man at home on the couch, not doing much of anything. Now he sees the opportunity for another year as an AmeriCorps or a part-time job in his future.

Absolutely! The member serves proudly and is showing a spirited, positive outlook.

Northern Arizona University:

The member has become known as the go-to person to connect with volunteerism in the community. As a result of her service, she hopes to secure employment that is in the service field.

Yes. Each member has begun to realize that conservation is the type of work that they would like to do as a career. One member would like to stay with ACE as a full time member after his hours are done.

Another member is a potential future crew leader.

Yes, certainly. I believe AmeriCorps has allowed our member the transition between graduate school and a professional career. This experience has given our member the chance to calmly and rationally assess his future and make a vetted decision on his future.

Yes absolutely! Many of our members "graduate" from this position to working for other arts organizations in town. Our two current members have just been accepted into prestigious graduate programs thanks in part to their experience with us. An AmeriCorps position with us usually results in greater opportunities elsewhere.

The member has used this opportunity to take a break from education and enhance her professional skill set and this has allowed her to take a critical look at her life and what she wants to do with it, including if she wants to pursue education, explore where she'd like to live, etc. She has said this has been a valuable experience for her.

**Pima Community College:**

Definitely! One member came into a mentoring session saying, "I get it now." The member was referring to the classroom role and the importance of using his strengths there.

One of the members is a parent herself, and I constantly see her reflecting on how she can apply what she's learning to become a better parent and a better role model for her children. I hear her planning out how she'll keep working on her education, so she eventually gets in the field of law enforcement. And, as a result of her work with children in our program, another member is now considering a career in education.

Yes. The member had no plans for furthering her education when she began. Now she is enrolled in an Early Childhood College Course and talks daily about the amazing knowledge she is gaining. She had always thought that she was active in her community, but now she has raised the bar on what that actually means for her.

Yes I do. My second year member has changed her course of study in school and has received requests for her to put in job applications. She is taking many classes and is excited about her future. My first year member is realizing her ability as a role model. She is full of ideas for topics and strategies to use in the

class this year and next year. She has embraced the program and its components and looks for ways to be a full participant.

Yes! All three of the members I work with are constantly reflecting on the work they are doing now, and how it will impact them and their families and the community in the future. One member is passing her GED exam as I write, one is already started in Community College, and the other has set a goal to continue working with adult education after she finishes her service.

#### **The Nature Conservancy:**

Members have had their eyes opened relative to the breadth of tasks that field conservation practitioners undertake. I have seen them, and especially one member, understand the significance of their contributions. It's been great watching TNC's partners appreciate the work of our members, which reinforces the value of that work and helps cement interest in future participation.

Yes, because of the different places they worked, and new skills they learned.

Yes - This experience is helping her identify what she would like to do in the future. The member is having the opportunity to explore different career fields and expand her interests.

#### **University of Arizona Wildcat Corps:**

One of our members has definitely "grown" during her time served. I think she is realizing how interconnected everything is, and just how important relationships are in trying to build community. Additionally, I think she has realized her potential in a field that she hadn't considered before, and is feeling empowered to pursue a future in that field (or at least a future that incorporates this expertise).

I think the member is interested in continuing the work that he started here at our farm by seeking something similar. But he is also flexible and can adapt to new work situations so I think it will just depend on what is available for him in the future. I do know that he enjoyed his work here and if possible, would like to do this type of work again.

She came in with a high level of experience already. I believe her experience through AmeriCorps has served to connect her to different opportunities and get to know the community better.

Yes I did. She was quiet and then became outgoing. She was always willing to try anything that would help our students.

#### **Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona:**

Yes, they want to continue farming or stay involved with food system policy issues in their future endeavors.

#### **Yavapai County Community Counts:**

Yes. The member has gained more professional experience and has been placed in a leadership position at camp where she has used her past knowledge and combined training as a school teacher to deliver a

program that is consistent with the girl scout model as well as SOLID instruction. She steps into positions of "taking charge" of the program really well and also readily admits mistakes when those are made and she learns from it. She is proud to be a part of AmeriCorps and takes advantage of the experiences AmeriCorps has provided.

## **Suggestions for Site Improvements (Members and Mentors)**

Both members and mentors were asked to make suggestions regarding ways to improve the AmeriCorps experience at their site. Many respondents had no suggestions and instead simply praised the program. The suggestions that were offered clustered around these areas:

- Greater clarity before receiving assignments regarding duties, expectations, and challenges
- More advanced notice when receiving a new assignment so can plan for it
- Greater flexibility regarding schedule
- More members assigned to site to share load, collaborate, and extend services
- More resources to use with clients
- More interaction with members assigned to different sites
- Better communication between members and host organization
- Opportunities for training with certificates to build resume

Site-specific suggestions were provided to the host agencies.



Arizona  
Governor's  
Commission  
on **Service** and  
**Volunteerism**



# Evaluation Report #3

## November 2012



## Report #3 Overview

This is the third and final of three evaluation reports that focus on the AmeriCorps experience for members in Arizona throughout the 2011-2012 funding cycle. The intent is to shed light on the rich and often life-altering member journeys and associated impacts, as told through their varied voices.

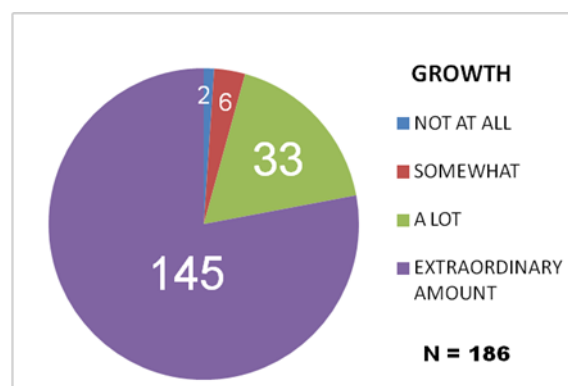
As they completed their year of service, all AmeriCorps members were encouraged to provide feedback on the year. They offered responses to four narrative probes and rated four complementary items. A secure website was used to capture this feedback. To gain most from this report, the reader should focus on both the summary of ratings in the next four sections and especially on the rich supporting narratives provided by the members that appear in the Appendix.

Exit feedback was received from 186 AmeriCorps members representing 14 programs in Arizona. Included were 131 females and 55 males. Their age range: 88 members were ages 17-25, 58 members were ages 26-49, and 40 members were 50 or older. 111 members were from Arizona and 65 members were from out-of-state (ten respondents did not indicate home state).

### Composite Results: Growth

The first item the members were asked to rate read: **To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**

The vast majority of the members (145 of 186, or 78 percent) reported that their growth was extraordinary. An additional 18 percent (33 of 186) reported a lot of growth. The complementary narrative responses to the probe, “What made it a positive growth experience for you?” clearly illustrate that these exceptionally high ratings were not exaggerated. The members described rich learning opportunities in areas new to them. They were encouraged to take initiative and stretch their limits. They served communities and populations with which they often had no prior experience. They reported newly gained confidence, enhanced skill sets, and personal experiences that were life-transforming.

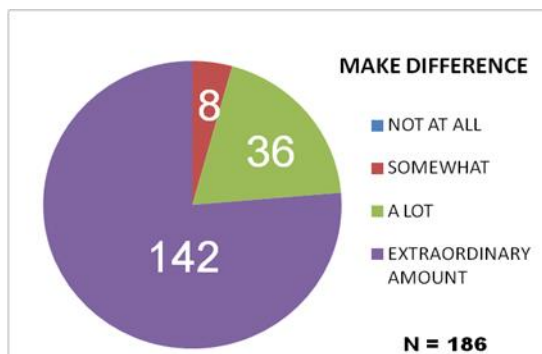


Eighty-two percent (82%) of the males reported extraordinary growth, as contrasted with seventy-six percent (76%) of the female members. Eighty-five percent (85%) of members aged 17-25 reported extraordinary growth, as contrasted with seventy-four percent (74%) of those aged 26-49 and seventy-three percent (73%) of those aged 50 or over. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the Arizona residents reported extraordinary growth, as contrasted with seventy-two percent (72%) for out-of-state members.

## Composite Results: Make a Difference

The second item the members were asked to rate read: **To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**

The vast majority of the members (142 of 186, or 76 percent) felt that the differences they made were extraordinary. An additional 25 percent (36 of 186) reported a lot of impact. The complementary narrative responses to the probe, “What is the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face?” resulted in several heart-warming responses. In these cases, the members were certain that they had touched the lives of another or others in profound ways. Others reported mastering skills or successfully performing tasks that they felt at the time were well beyond their capabilities. Still others focused on the innovations they had brought to their host organizations or at schools or other institutions they served.

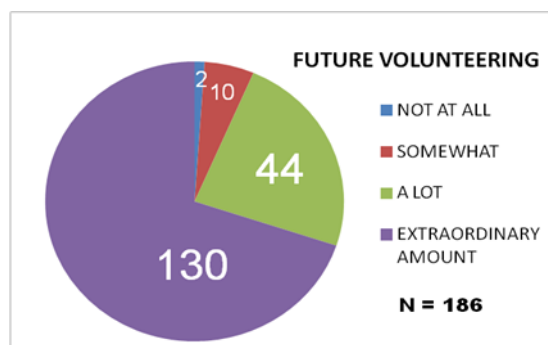


Eighty percent (80%) of the males reported making extraordinary difference, as contrasted with seventy-five percent (75%) of the female members. Eighty-five percent (85%) of members aged 50 or over reported making extraordinary difference, as contrasted with seventy-six percent (76%) of those aged 17-25 and seventy-one percent (71%) of those aged 50 or over. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the Arizona residents reported making extraordinary difference, as contrasted with seventy-one percent (71%) for out-of-state members.

## Composite Results: Future Volunteering

The third item the members were asked to rate read: **To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**

The vast majority of the members (130 of 186, or 70 percent) reported that their AmeriCorps experiences had an extraordinary influence on their commitment to volunteering in the future. An additional 24 percent (44 of 186) reported a lot of influence on their future actions. The complementary narrative responses to the probe, “What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year and in the future?” led to a variety of answers. Quite a few members indicated they would continue working with the same or a similar organization in the coming year. Many were still vague about their immediate future while insisting that volunteerism would definitely be a component of that future.



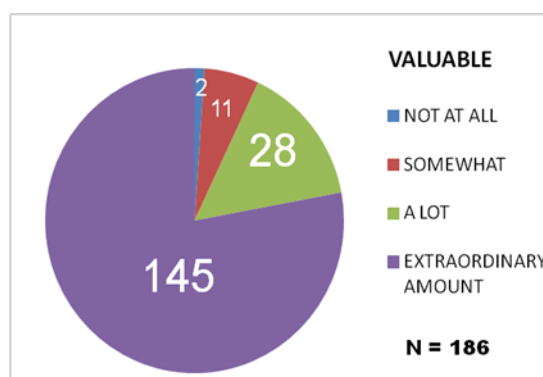


Seventy-one percent (71%) of the females reported an extraordinary influence on their future commitment to volunteerism, as contrasted with sixty-seven percent (67%) of the male members. Eighty-three percent (83%) of members aged 50 or over reported an extraordinary influence, as contrasted with sixty-nine percent (69%) of those aged 17-25 and sixty-two percent (62%) of those aged 26-49. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the Arizona residents reported an extraordinary influence, as contrasted with sixty-two percent (62%) for out-of-state members.

## Composite Results: More Valuable as Employee or Volunteer

The fourth item the members were asked to rate read: **To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**

The vast majority of the members (145 of 186, or 78 percent) reported that their AmeriCorps experiences had made them either more employable or a more capable volunteer. An additional 15 percent (28 of 186) reported a lot of value added. The complementary narrative responses to the probe, “How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?” produced mostly optimistic forecasts. Some pointed to full-time employment they had already secured due at least in part to their service with AmeriCorps. Many indicated having greatly expanded networks and stronger resumes, as well as deeper understanding of what they can contribute to the nonprofit world.



Eighty-five percent (85%) of the males reported an extraordinary amount of added value, as contrasted with seventy-five percent (75%) for the female members. Eighty-four percent (84%) of members aged 17-25 reported extraordinary added value, as contrasted with seventy-two percent (72%) of those aged 26-49 and of those aged 50 or over. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the Arizona residents reported extraordinary added value, as contrasted with seventy-one percent (71%) for out-of-state members.

## How Results Mesh with CNCS Goals and Priority Measures

These reported results to the four rated items and to the narrative probes in the Appendix definitely aligned with three goals of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS): (1) increase impact of national service on community needs; (2) participants consistently find satisfaction, meaning, and opportunity; and (3) maximize value added to grantees, partners, and participants. In terms of the 16 CNCS agency-wide priority measures, rich qualitative evidence was provided regarding support to veterans and military families (American Red Cross), at-risk acres improved (several programs), improved academic performance of students (also several programs), support for homebound older

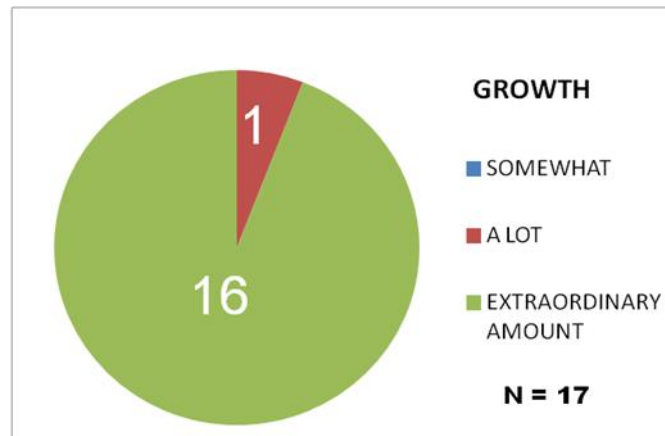
adults (Area Agency on Aging and Mesa United Way), and expanded educational, employment, or civic opportunities (several programs).

## Appendix

### Exit Feedback from 14 Programs

#### EXIT FEEDBACK AMERICAN CONSERVATION EXPERIENCE (ACE)

To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?



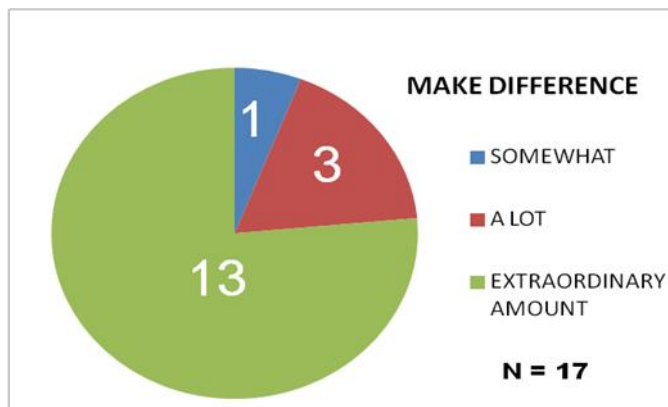
Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.

- I have come to really appreciate the people around me and the places I go. Each project offers a new opportunity to advance my work skills, social skills, and to enhance my cultural interests. It has been an amazing time living and working alongside a group of diverse individuals from all over the world.
- Opportunities to learn from co-workers and develop leadership skills.
- My term with AmeriCorps has been a colossal opportunity for growth and development. I have been presented with appropriate challenges and the encouragement I needed to excel. The support from the organization was great and really helped me excel.
- Working with A.C.E as an AmeriCorps member gives you so much responsibility and opportunity to prove yourself as a leader. This experience allowed me to establish my own style of leadership. What really gave me the chance to apply skills I gained in particular, was working on our Apache Sitgreaves projects. Leading small crews on our own really pushed my ability to work with volunteers, the project partner, and to produce quality work. This was a very positive moment for me because it showed my improvement clearly.
- I had a positive growth experience because I was put in a position where I had opportunities to expand upon my leadership skills. During several projects I acted as the assistant supervisor.
- Over the past 6 months I have learned so much about conservation, leadership, working with others, and myself. It has also helped me challenge myself and bring myself out of my comfort zone. This past week I was working in Lake Havasu in 110+ degree weather cutting tamarisk. This experience showed me what I could accomplish and helped me figure out my strengths and weaknesses.

- ACE pushed me to my physical and mental limits to accomplish meaningful tasks. I also grew personally by interacting with international volunteers and other Americans to "broaden my horizons." My leadership skills have grown exponentially as well. I can't ask for more than that to create a positive experience for me.
- Working with people from all over the world in the beautiful Southwest.
- Working with many different personalities and learning many new leadership skills.
- Being one small part of a large whole that is devoted to something beyond myself. Knowing that my participation is small; transient; and necessary but not central, motivates me to try my hardest. This idea of work ethic through humility may sound religious, and it almost is.
- This experience was positive because I got to work with people on different levels of professionalism. It has been great to have more responsibility with the organization from housing to work projects. As mentor to volunteers I can share my past experiences and hope to inspire and guide them.
- I really enjoyed working with this conservation corps which has many international members. It has provided me with many opportunities for growth both culturally and professionally, as I spent time with them socially and also had to lead them through work. This is experience that is incredibly valuable and is impossible to find a substitute for.
- Countless opportunities to develop professionally and personally have made this a positive growth experience so far. Frequent positive interactions with friendly and ambitious people have also contributed to an exceptional experience.
- Spending two and a half months in one of the most heavily fire impacted and remote areas of Arizona has allowed me to appreciate the many opportunities and challenges that working with American Conservation Experience has provided. I have been able to work with an extremely hard-working, enthusiastic group of people who I have learned a lot from, both professionally and personally. Leading a small crew of people that I trust, I was able to develop my leadership, communication and logistical skills
- Recognizing myself in other corps members who are struggling to find meaning, drive, purpose, and offering them advice I would have appreciated when I was in their place. I still struggle with this, certainly, but can also recognize how far I've come.
- The most positive growth experience for me has been in gaining leadership skills. I have had the opportunity over the past few months to co-lead and lead crews and it has really opened my eyes to my potential as a leader.
- Positive growth experiences: leading/learning from/teaching international volunteers; obtaining new certifications; and learning how to do trail work and chainsaw training. Just by giving my time and energy to ACE made the whole experience gratifying and rewarding for me.
- I learned and improved many technical skills throughout my AmeriCorps term and was presented with frequent opportunities to put these skills to use. I grew as a person and became not only more confident and decisive but also better at communicating with others. Last but certainly not least, I met many wonderful people from diverse backgrounds and I will never forget the experiences I shared with these people.
- I learned to feel confident in raising my voice and getting everybody on the same page. I could answer questions when others needed information. I knew each day what the common goal was, the importance on each project, and the overall results from our work on the environment.

- The variety of skills learned and situations encountered allowed me to grow and develop as a leader. The positive support from ACE staff as well as other PDMs allowed me to acquire a broad base of skills, and in turn, allowed me to teach these skills to other volunteers.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**

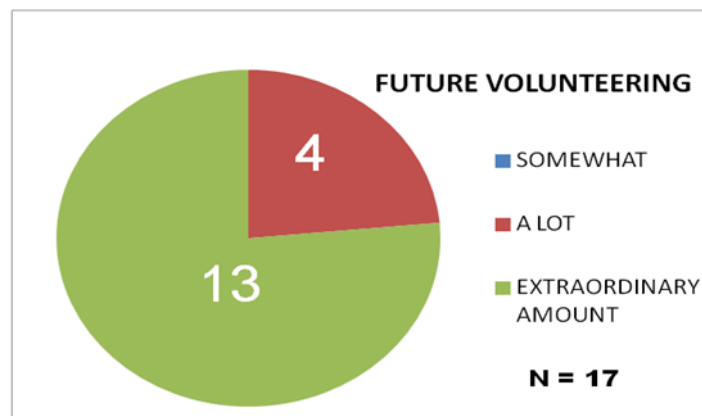


**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- I have really enjoyed the education and training (i.e. CPR/First Aid, chainsaw, back country camping) that I received from ACE. It will definitely be important in future jobs.
- Eating 12 of Buffalo Wild Wings spiciest wings in under 3 minutes...set a new record at that restaurant location for fastest time!
- No single accomplishment stands out, but the general progression of my skills and leadership has been excellent.
- What brings a smile to my face was when I was given the chance to navigate and lead small crews on the Apache Sitgreaves projects. I learned the most from the projects there and felt like I was really given the chance to prove myself and see how far I have come throughout my entire term. I was very happy with my performance there and the work results that came from the groups I led.
- When I first started I was very uncomfortable with chain saws and thought about asking to not use them. However I ended up not saying anything and gradually got more and more comfortable with them, and overcame my fear.
- Brushing and retreading the entire Canada del Oro trail in Coronado National Forest, which we accomplished in two projects.
- Getting Grand Canyon trail work done 3 days before the project partner expected us to. I smiled so big when I found that we were being given extra work because we were simply too good :)
- Making it through the past 6 months. The smile is for new adventures ahead.
- Being put on a crew armoring drains with boulders. I lead my own small six person crew for this project and I had never done rock work. It went very well and turned out great!

- All the friends that I've made. Human connection (inspiration, challenge, love) is second to none.
- Knowing that I can commit to something and accomplish it thoroughly. Also being able to travel through the Southwest and see beautiful places and know that I have been a part of something to conserve that area.
- My time here has helped me to realize that you must be flexible with every aspect of any work environment. At first it seemed so hectic, and it seemed like it could be changed. But so often, things beyond everyone's control makes organization almost impossible. I realized that I had to just smile and get through it, and eventually the smile became real and constant. The only constant it would seem is that things will always change, and apparently you can keep smiling through it all.
- I was able to participate in a single project in the White Mountains of Arizona for two and a half months, seeing it through from start to finish. Though challenging at times, it proved ultimately to be very rewarding and provided a significant sense of accomplishment. In the process, I fell in love with the White Mountains and thinking of my time there will always make me smile.
- The single greatest accomplishment of these past few months has to have been the last day of work at Apache-Sitgreaves. We had been working in Apache for the past two and a half months straight, from our first training week with the US Forest Service up till then. Though we had an influx of new crew members every project, the same group of 12-15 originals had become pros at laying down pheromone caps to protect against bark beetle kill. We had steadily been improving on efficiency and number of acres covered, but for our last tour, only experienced members were returning. On the last day, my crew shattered all previous records in less than a full work day. That day symbolizes all the time and energy, not to mention sweat that we had expended over the summer. As for the smile, I couldn't have ended that journey on a better note than a job well done.
- Crew life because it's the best. Families are created on hitch (Not literally).
- I was put in charge of repairing a section of trail that needed major work. We built a stair and retaining wall to fix the trail. All of the crew members were impressed with our work and getting compliments from them, hikers, and the project partner put a huge smile on my face. It was the first time I was in charge of a project like that, so the success felt really good!
- Teaching the skills I have learned over the years to others. Spreading knowledge and experience is my life's mission.
- The completion of each project was a very significant accomplishment in its own right, and I am very proud of the work I completed with my crews. The work was always satisfying because it produced tangible results, but it is even more rewarding to know that it will have a positive and lasting impact on the environment.
- Our work in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest was by far my biggest accomplishment with ACE. We spent 2 1/2 months working towards such a long-term goal in saving most of the forest from the flight of bark beetles; overcoming such a time frame and still continuing to produce such great efficient work.
- Learning how to successfully use a rock bar and build a rock wall with Amy. I could see that my work directly helped preserve an awesome biking trail in Flagstaff.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**



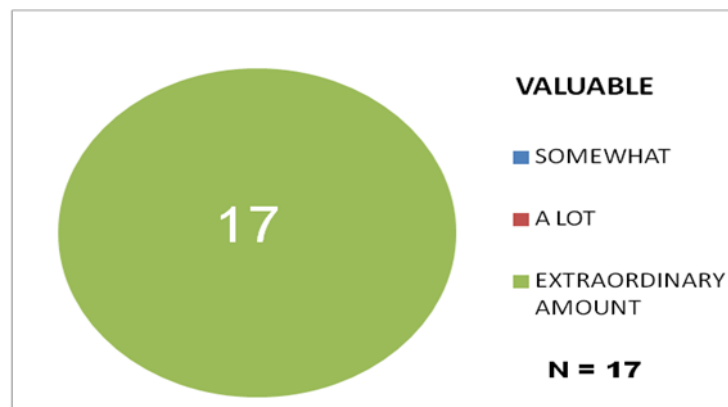
**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I will definitely do more volunteering.
- I would like to continue working with American Conservation Experience.
- I plan to continue my work with ACE.
- Environmental work, especially manual labor, is something that I very much want to continue for at least the next couple of years. I feel that having this volunteer and AmeriCorps experience was so beneficial and that volunteering will continue to be important with any job that I pursue. Hopefully my next step will be continuing on with A.C.E, working on a farm, or working with organizations such as USGS on rivers.
- After ACE I plan to continue volunteering through another AmeriCorps conservation corps.
- I plan to get involved in the trails community when I move this fall to go to grad school. Also, I am a volunteer at the local humane society.
- I hope to volunteer on some level for the rest of my life, helping in any conservation work that I can.
- Continue in conservation and serve another Americorps term
- I plan to volunteer a few times
- I'd like to continue pursuing work (volunteer-based or other) that benefits me and my surrounding community, environment, world, etc. My experience with Americorps has been very positive (housing, some food, a stipend, and terrific work- quite the package), so I may come back for more.
- I have been considering more AmeriCorps positions, but I will definitely continue to volunteer for causes that I greatly support.

- I'll be following up my time here with a year-long commitment to a non-profit summer camp based on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. Hopefully I'll be able to utilize the skills I've acquired here to enrich the camp and all that visit it.
- I plan to continue working in the conservation field and to explore volunteer opportunities in my community.
- I am still discovering new parts of myself and new interests and I definitely believe that volunteering and community service is a big part of that self-discovery. I would like to continue along with environmentally-themed projects and inter-agency/inter-community cooperation. Volunteering will always be a big part of my life.
- I'd like to continue pursuing work that makes me feel like I'm giving to something beyond myself. I have no interest in working something like retail.
- I plan on getting more involved in volunteering opportunities next year and the future, especially in the outdoor realm (trail days, etc.).
- Once I know where I'll be living in two weeks, I plan to attend an organized volunteer event once a month.
- I intend to continue to pursue conservation work, likely with the organization with which I completed my AmeriCorps term. In the future, I hope to continue to stay involved with causes in which I believe strongly.
- I plan to continue working within AmeriCorps programs, to continue to feel a strong sense of community and help out in any way I can.
- I hope to volunteer on an organic farm in the US, as well as volunteer my time around the world in the education sector.



**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**



**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

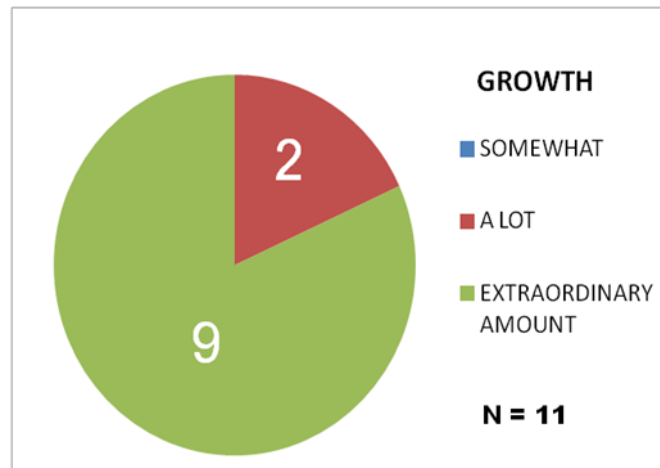
- Meeting people and learning things relevant to future jobs.
- I have been able to network with a lot of people from the National Park Service and US Forest Service that could help me in future career pursuits. I have also gained valuable work skills, and received trainings such as the S212 and S130/190 courses.
- My AmeriCorps experience has excellently prepared me for a future with ACE.
- This role has taught me so much about myself. It has strengthened my ability to professionally communicate, lead, perform, and represent myself and an organization within the work field and the community. Without this base of experience and knowledge in my history, I feel it would be very hard to get a job within this profession.
- My experience with AmeriCorps has helped me gain and expand upon outdoor skills such as hiking, backpacking, camping, and trail maintenance. I want to continue to work outside in the future so I believe these skills will be helpful for future employment.
- This experience has definitely taught me some important skills that will be useful in any sort of future employment.
- The various certifications we have been trained in will certainly be useful in future employment. They show that I am a professionally trained, determined individual who can get the job done. The work experience itself shows my willingness to other employers to work hard and under harsh conditions.
- Hopefully experience in conservation will help in leadership roles and has inspired me even more so to return to school.
- I have built a huge skill set and feel very confident I will be able to get a job in a related field.
- I've learned a lot while working for ACE, and, though I can't say for sure where, I know it will take me somewhere. This has not been a vacation out of the norm that will be my life.

- This has been a great opportunity to network and enhance my work skills in the field.
- It has supplied me with many trainings and knowledge from the leaders here that will be applicable in ways I'm sure I couldn't even imagine. And it has given me the self confidence to tackle just about anything that may come my way.
- My experience has enabled me to continue to develop skills that will help me succeed professionally and make a difference in the world around me.
- Serving in AmeriCorps, especially with ACE, has given me valuable professional skills in the workplace and within a young, growing organization. I feel much more confident in running with ideas I may have and filling needs that I see.
- It's unclear exactly where I'm about to go, but I'm very thankful for this experience.
- My experiences with AmeriCorps have shaped the path that i want my future to take.
- I have made new contacts with project partners that I met while on projects. And just doing conservation work in general has me excited and interested in pursuing it.
- They have prepared me for challenges ahead by providing me with specific technical skills, leadership and interpersonal skills, and experience.
- My AmeriCorps experiences have and will continue to be life changing. I have become a person of strong character because of my time serving. The skills are unbelievable that I have been able to learn while completing my service hours. I feel strongly in finding future work and continuing to make a difference in my community.
- The variety of skills learned has led me to develop a well-rounded resume, as well as the knowledge necessary to continue to work in the conservation field.

## EXIT FEEDBACK

### AMERICAN RED CROSS SOUTHERN ARIZONA CHAPTER: OPERATION DESERT HOME

To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?

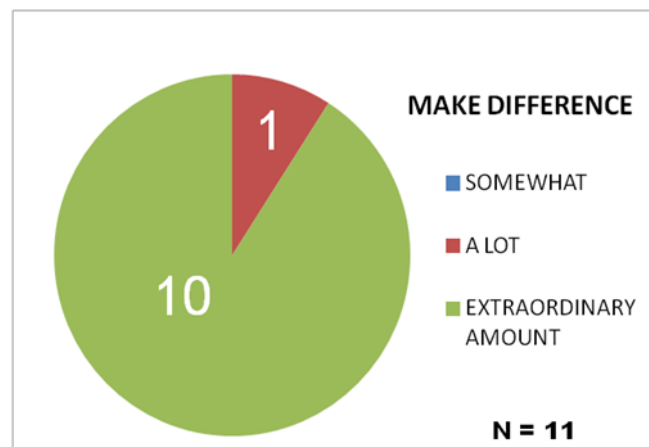


Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response. (Note: some members made multiple entries)

- As in the past, the positive reinforcement from the service members, veterans, their dependents and survivors enhances my desire to continue to provide the best possible assistance to them that I can.
- Everything good or bad has been a positive growth experience for me. I think the biggest example of growth is the confidence that has improved in my skills, abilities, and networking.
- I am better able to serve Veterans, homeless, and people in trouble with the law. Since I am a Social Work student, this was a very good experience for me. I look forward to putting some of the things I learned to use in the future.
- Working with veterans. Many times over the course of the year I worked with veterans and grew a new perspective of some of the realities they must contend with.
- Learning about how we can positively influence the lives of others.
- The free-rein given to me to facilitate and develop programs, events and contacts due to confidence in skills that have been polished throughout my AmeriCorps terms. For example: Facilitating, organizing and successfully initiating to a close the Tucson Veterans Serving Veterans Stand Down in May, 2011, in which 300 volunteers and 65 community partners and committee members provided food, clothing, medical, legal, veterinarian, program provision, etc. for 97 homeless veterans and their family members.
- Serving the veteran community and being able to secure help and support for them.

- Being able to hear first-hand the needs of veterans and military family members, and provide assistance to them.
- The entire experience has been wonderful. For awhile I thought that the experience would end up not being of long-term value; but, now that I am working in the hospital (pharmacy rotations) the skills I've gained while working at the Red Cross have proven extremely useful.
- Finding successful resolution and finding resources for clients in need.
- Over the last two years...really. I see who I was and where I was and the vague idea of goals I had when I started, and then I see myself now. The difference in confidence, knowledge and a clear-cut objective is staggering and very eye-opening. This was only due to the entire AC experience, not any one thing.
- Working with active duty, guard, reserve, veterans and their families in various situations and helping them with their issues.
- The AmeriCorps program has made this a positive growth experience for me by providing me with information, resources, and training to provide assistance to those service members, veterans and families. I was put out of my comfort zone and put in front of many people to brief, teach, and train on different aspects. This has allowed me to grow in my public speaking abilities and being comfortable standing in front of a crowd. My self esteem and confidence levels have grown quite a bit from participating in this program.
- Just being able to get outside of my comfort zone, being able to speak in front of people is a very positive experience. I know that I can go out there and get things done.
- The AmeriCorps program – under OPERATION DESERT HOME provided me with the chance to put my ideals and long-standing, deep-felt passion into action, learn new skills, and make new connections, and earn money for college. It afforded me the opportunity to assist, and serve our Veteran and Military and their families in or facing homelessness. This was accomplished along with my A/C team members wherein we provided service and volunteerism to Arizona Communities. Events in providing services included Stand Down (October 2011 & April 2012; Tucson Homeless Connect March and July 2012) Essentially a one stop of connects to Providers and Services – Shelter - housing; Haircuts; Medical Triage; Food; Clothing; bus passes; job connects, and much more.
- There were many times were I felt as if I was doing good in our community and in the lives of the veterans we served. The moment, however, that sticks out the most is handing out bags of candy and fruit to disabled children during Heroes Day at DM-AFB. It was really rewarding seeing their faces light up and also get to watch them watch the Thunderbirds. Overall, it was great experience that in a sense encompasses the entirety of my stay with AmeriCorps and the American Red Cross.
- Since I am a Social Service student at Pima, I want to specialize in behavioral health and substance use disorder. So working with the veterans in the mentoring program gave me an opportunity to work with veterans and see their point of view. It also gave me a chance to work with those with substance abuse problems and being on probation. I was able to use my personal and family experience to help others. I was also able to make contacts throughout my community for my future endeavors. I also met some fantastic people.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**



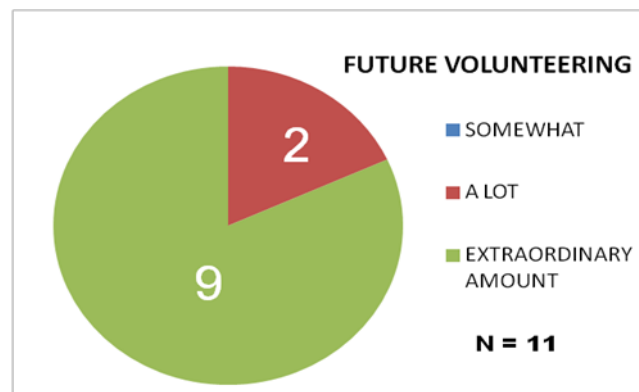
**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

(Note: some members made multiple entries)

- Helping a combat, service connected female veteran. Over 10 years, the help just wasn't there when she needed it. The smile comes from the positive appreciation she gave to me.
- The whole Employment Resource Center that I have helped create has been the thing that brings a smile to my face and sometimes even tears to my eyes. I smile because I know that what I have helped do is a huge accomplishment and that I have helped greatly to improve the lives of those service members, veterans, and their families to find a job, prepare for a job and get a job. Every time I hear of a success story, I am smiling big and tear up knowing that I had a hand in improving someone's situation.
- The one thing that stands out the most is when we held a breakfast for all my mentees and mentors. I had one mentee that is very depressed and doesn't really have any family or friends, I saw him walk in so I made a point to go welcome him. In doing so it brought a big smile to his face and he thanked me for noticing he was there. He also said it's nice for someone to acknowledge him and it made him feel really good about himself. I continued to give him positive reinforcement throughout the morning, as well as every time I saw him after. It always brought a smile to his face and mine.
- Being a volunteer coordinator was a big accomplishment. It brought a smile to my face because I got to help homeless veterans.
- Working with my team.
- That through my AmeriCorps service, not only did I gain legitimate skills in a new field, but that it turned from national service to an actual employment position.
- Moving into a salaried position.
- When a case goes well, and helping my coworkers accomplish a difficult task.
- Finding jobs for unemployed veterans.

- The knowledge that our program not only was successful, but is now sustainable...that we accomplished, and continue to accomplish our mission. The friends, experience and education I gained always leave me smiling!
- I don't think it's so much one single accomplishment, but rather the great staff and leadership I had the privilege to work with.
- My single biggest accomplishment was building the ERC. It makes me smile because I know it started from nothing and helping no one, to now helping a minimum of 25 people find employment. How can you not be happy and smile knowing that you made such a positive impact on people.
- Just the idea of being out in the community and letting the people know that our military families need help and in turn showing our military families that they have a one stop shop (so to speak) as where they can go to get resources.
- Having worked with a homeless veteran for almost two years, meeting with him most Sunday mornings for hot breakfast, taking those tiny steps forwards and backwards in him being ready to come in for case management with American Red Cross, AmeriCorps. He said yes on 8/19/2012 which also was his 60th birthday. When he spoke those words to me "he was ready" it brought the greatest smile upon my face, and more so in my heart. He did come in, the following Wednesday, we made a case plan for him. We have not heard back from him to date, but I am hopeful. After all it took two years to get him in, so what is another few weeks?
- Providing items to warrior transition unit. The soldiers were very thankful.
- My biggest accomplishment has been finishing with the Red Cross and performing at a high level. My job was not actually established for months, but even so I felt I made a difference to our team and to our target group we were servicing and that was very rewarding.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**



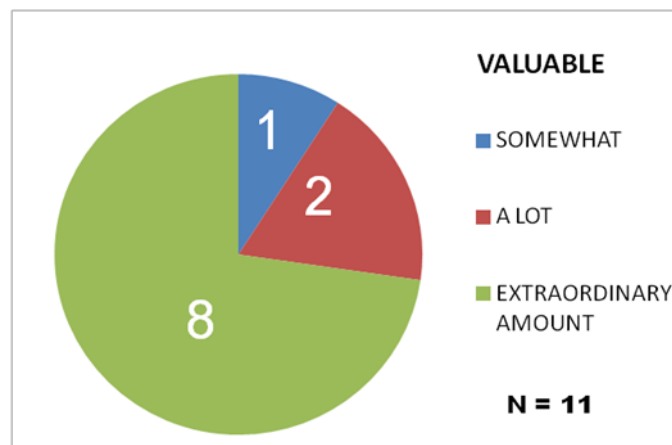
**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?** (Note: some members made multiple entries)

- It is my sincere hope to continue in this capacity for the foreseeable future.
- My biggest accomplishment has been finishing with the Red Cross and performing at a high level. My job was not actually established for months, but even so I felt I made a difference to our team and to our target group we were servicing and that was very rewarding.
- I still will be working with the community on outreach efforts and coordinating volunteers. I have secured a position with the Arizona Coalition for Military Families and though I will be working hard to increase community service, I will be paid to do it. Volunteering and serving has always been a value to me that cannot be replaced by anything else. I will continue to volunteer my time with the Special Olympics and many other organizations. If given the opportunity to ever join Americorps again, I would.
- Since I am a full time student and my schedule is a lot stricter this year, I am not sure I will be able to volunteer my time. However, since I am a social service student, it will require me to do some community service and an internship in the behavioral health field.
- Working for the American Red Cross on a full time basis.
- Volunteering will always be a fundamental part of my life.
- Have not yet decided.
- I will likely stay on at the Red Cross as a volunteer, and possibly continue some other projects that I've begun with them like the service league.
- Undecided at this time.
- Continue to work with many community partners in the upcoming years.

- Encourage those I know to volunteer. I will still be volunteering my time in a smaller capacity, but not at 31 hours per week.
- I plan on getting more involved within my community and finding other organizations that I can volunteer with.
- I plan to continue in serving those valuable populations to include woman and children of domestic violence, veteran, military, community. I will look to further my education in pursuance in counseling; along with keeping collaboration as Volunteer Coordinator with Tucson Homeless Connect events reaching over 300 individuals twice a year, and continue in being 1st line of contact (help line) for DV support and referral. In seeking higher education, perhaps clinician in helping others.
- I am a full time Social Work student so I will be holding community organization events throughout the next few semesters. But as of right now I have no plans.
- My next community service project is for class where I will begin practicing therapy to individuals. I will use the interpersonal skills I learned with AmeriCorps to supplement and enhance my therapeutic framework and continue to maintain a sense of serving the community.
- Because of AmeriCorps, I was able to land an employable position in the non-profit sector so that I can still continue to follow my love of being an active and contributing part of my community.



**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**



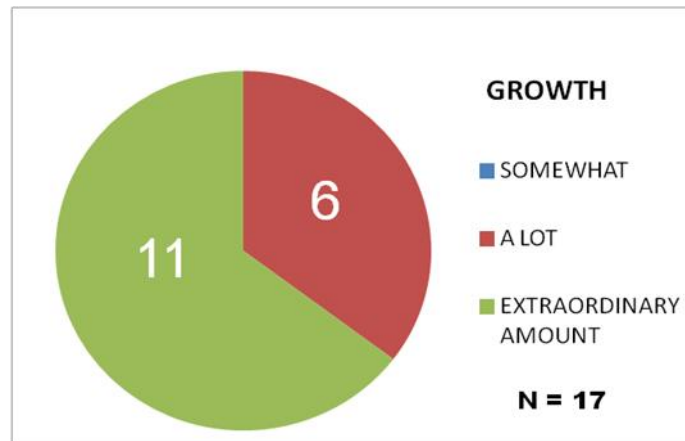
**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?** (Note: some members made multiple entries)

- It has enabled me to extend services beyond previous limitations. I am semi-retired and know that my experience with Americorps will serve me well.
- I have obtained a job doing as the Employment Resource Coordinator through the ACMF. This is directly related to the Americorps program and my volunteer efforts.
- I have met a lot of community partners and made a lot of connections with different people within the community. I feel that they all will be a great asset to me when I begin my work in the field.
- I believe it has and will be a good reference of experience.
- Directly had an impact on my qualifications for employment.
- Due to the popularity and sustainability of the program I started with AmeriCorps, the program grew into an actual paid position, retaining what I do as a viable community resource.
- Networking with community partners has created an opportunity of positive exposure.
- Provide more options
- I have established numerous contacts in the community during my time at the Red Cross. I have also learned extremely valuable skills while working there.
- Developing our program for the past year has provided a path for me to move on to the Supportive Services for Veterans Families in a full time capacity with the Red Cross as a full time employee.

- As the Outreach Coordinator, not only was I able to make excellent contacts, but further my own contact base within the community that in turn lead me to being highly sought after and employable.
- The AmeriCorps program laid the foundation for permanent employment with the American Red Cross.
- I have accepted a job with Employment Partnership of the Armed Forces where I will still be working finding employment for service members, and veterans, but now getting paid for it. It's a win-win.
- This will help me with finding another job, with the experience of working with people and that I'm not afraid to look outside of my comfort zone.
- Been hired at American Red Cross as Finance Contract Specialist Supportive Services to Veterans and their Families. This extends our already existing efforts in serving the at-risk and homeless populations of Arizona. But for receiving this financial assistance, veterans would become homeless.
- My past has held me back quite a bit in the last 5-7 years and being given a chance here may open the eyes to future employers that I am a good asset to a team and a hard worker. My past was my past, I was young and made very bad choices but have since then grown up and am trying to make a good future for myself and my family.
- I am not sure at this point but I will continue to utilize the skills I have learned at the American Red Cross and AmeriCorps to facilitate my transition into a professional.

**EXIT FEEDBACK**  
**AREA AGENCY ON AGING REGION ONE:**  
**LOS ANCIANOS—SENIORS SERVING SENIORS**

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**

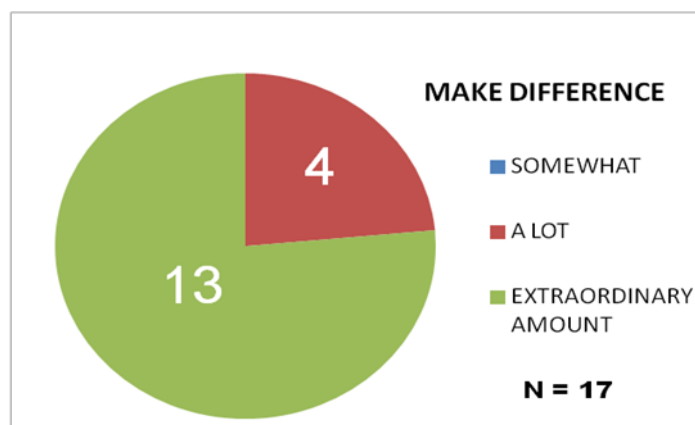


**Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.**

- The drive for independence from my clients.
- It was a great experience to work with the senior community .I was so happy to help the needy ones. Some individuals are so weak it is very difficult to move. I am so happy to help the helpless. They are thankful every step I am with them. It gave me great happiness in my life.
- My awesome site supervisor was a great mentor to me! I learned invaluable lessons from her, such as how to listen well, how to handle crisis situations, and when to report to APS. She mentored me through assisting a recently-diagnosed client with connecting to the Alzheimer's Association. She was always positive and grateful for everything I did and made me feel valuable and loved.
- It is a great experience to work with the senior communities, they are thankful every step I help them. It gives encouragement for the people who help the seniors. Some people are helpless and sick they can't move properly. It is a good experience.
- Since I am near the age of many of my clients, I gained a greater knowledge of the problems of the aging society. There are so many souls who have no one who will help them.
- Answering questions people had about my areas of community service, and how community services would benefit them.
- The opportunity to reach out and provide assistance to the elderly by outreaching to the faith community and soliciting volunteers.

- When I look back on this past year, I know that this opportunity to serve my fellow seniors were just what that doctor ordered. I have met some very special people that really needed these services that we provided.
- Working with the different cultures and employees from different agencies. Working with seniors from all walks of life and hearing their personal stories and life experiences.
- I worked with people of all back grounds.
- Working with the senior citizens and realizing they all have a story to tell.
- Interacting with seniors. Becoming an instructor for Matter of Balance and Living Well (Chronic Disease Pain Management) courses was very enjoyable.
- I learned so many things this year. I was at home and very depressed after my husband passed away. This program taught me that I still have something worthwhile and was able to share my knowledge with other people.
- Meeting so many wonderful seniors and watching their lust for an active and helpful life.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**



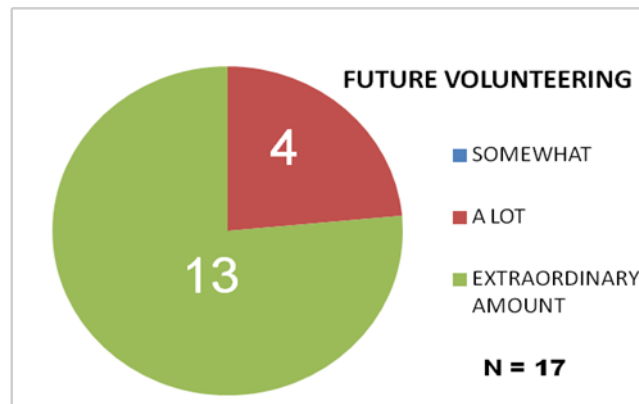
**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- Advocating for a client in a rehab facility. The smile comes from her face to mine; her love and gratitude was immeasurable.
- The ability for one of my clients to accomplish dialysis at home. I smiled as she wanted this so badly and although handicapped, was able to make it!
- When I applied for Arizona long-term care for my client he was not having money to pay his rent and co-pay for his drugs .He used to go emergency every week, since he was suffering from unknown painful sickness. When long-term care was approved that was a happiest thing that made me smile.
- One that comes to mind...a 10th grader, encouraged by her nana, walked-in and said she wanted to volunteer (of course, we gladly accepted her!). She said she loved her nana so much; and since her nana had begun her own volunteer experience at about this same age, she wanted to do the same!

Just a nice warmhearted moment...that brought a smile and a tear (remembering my own wonderful grandmas). We CAN pass on the "volunteer spirit"!

- I always enjoyed see one client. She was 87 and yet her thinking was more like a thirty something! I always enjoyed being with her!
- Helping a young disabled father of two find housing to help him keep his family together.
- A mega-church signing the covenant to provide 14 volunteers to the organization.
- A smile on my client's face. Because I'm happy when my clients are happy.
- Seeing and hearing the seniors pride in their accomplishments of improving their health.
- Seeing other people smile.
- When the seniors tell me that before the exercise they were unable to perform a said function.
- Teaching. I enjoy teaching, no matter the topic. My biggest accomplishment this year I think was in helping one of my seniors who was in an abusive relationship. By providing different speakers and classes throughout the year, she realized that she was in an abusive relationship and learned how to make changes!! I smile because I now see a very happy outgoing person

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**

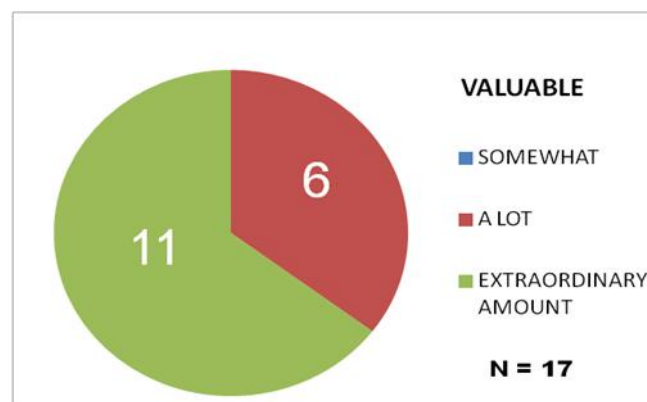


**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I am happy to work with senior communities in the future. I am also getting old and I have a great pleasure to be with them.
- I am looking forward to volunteering in the future.
- I have been hired by the United Way Mesa RSVP program as Assistant Director in charge of Special Events.

- I plan to work with homebound seniors, getting paid to do the things I've been volunteering to do because I am on disability and need the money. In the future, I will volunteer when I can afford to do so.
- I plan to continue to volunteer as long as I am blessed with good health.
- I will volunteer again for I'm able to help seniors like myself.
- I plan to take a little time off and then find something I can do, probably not as intensive as what I have been doing.
- I will continue my volunteer service at ABIL to continue to promote empowerment and independent living.
- I will continue to provide services to the elderly. As a result of my volunteer work, I was offered a full time position.
- I'd like to continue volunteering on a part time or an as-needed basis. I have taught classes and would like to keep those current.
- I will continue with Americorps if possible, or work in schools.
- I will continue working with AmeriCorps.
- I will continue to lead the seniors in exercises.
- Continue in same position, continue volunteering. I feel that service is very rewarding--giving back to the community.
- I am still with AmeriCorps but also volunteer at my local elementary school tutoring 1st graders,

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**



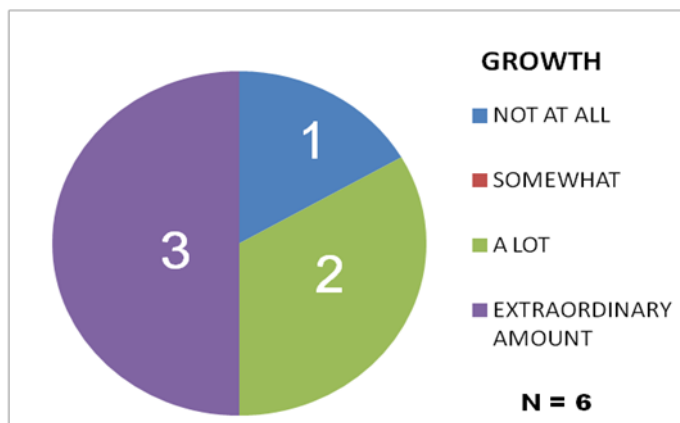
**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

- I have terrific work ethics and now have more confidence.
- It will be good experience. I learned about senior difficulties that everyone will face in coming days.

- I received my Direct Worker's Certification and Level I Clearance Card, in addition to 2 years of experience, which will assist me in getting a job.
- At my age, I'm not looking for new employment/roles in the community...but, I do want to continue for as long as I can as a Volunteer Coordinator.
- I have always tried to volunteer in some capacity, but I feel as if I have more knowledge now.
- AmeriCorps has helped me realize that I need to continue my education. That is my goal.
- I am currently working full-time as a Kinship Care Specialist.
- I plan on having my own business, quite similar to this program as I had planned to do about nine years ago. This opportunity has made me more confident.
- It has broadened my scope of possibilities. Even though I don't have a degree in the health field or aging, I have opportunities.
- I understand that all people need help in time of need.
- I deliver home bound meals and take the seniors shopping.
- No effect on future employment. Enjoyable experiences through volunteering.
- It has given me many new experiences and I have learned so much that I have been offered jobs.

**EXIT FEEDBACK  
ARTS FOR ALL, INC.**

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**

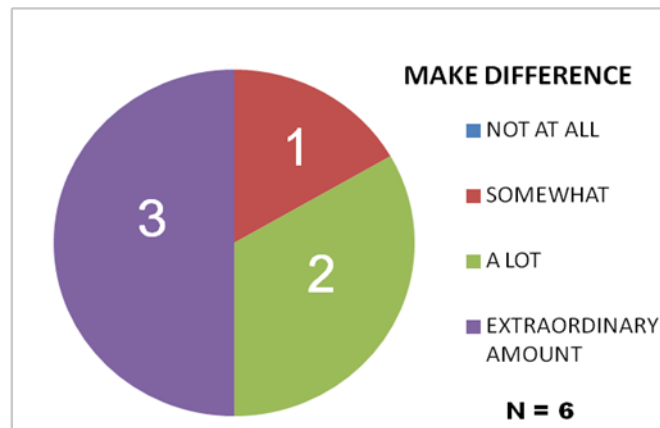


**Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.**

- I have grown in the sense that I now can deal with many different situations (i.e., someone throwing a tantrum or completely breaking down) in a patient and calm manner.
- I was able to learn so much from the participants. As well as being able to understand different methods of working with them, understanding their needs and how I could be of use. An example of this would be how I am able to communicate effectively and get results from a participant who had a history of being violent. So overall it was a positive growing experience because I was able to do hands-on learning.
- One of the most positive growth experiences of my service over the past year has been my participation in the National Art Education Association conference in New York City. There I was able to become an ambassador for Arts for Alls arts-based mission to educators from all over the country, and at the same time I had the opportunity to learn about the wider world of art education (especially in its relation to the K-12 public school context).
- What made this year a positive experience was just working on myself to become a better person for me and others as well.
- I met a lot of truly amazing participants, staff, and other AmeriCorps at Arts for All, but towards the end of it I was not happy. I did learn two things about myself: (1) what I want to pursue for my career and (2) that I do not want to work in this field (day program setting). In total, it was not a positive experience. As AmeriCorps we are told to help grow and contribute to the organizations, but I felt that at my assignment my opinion was not respected nor welcomed. To me this is not what AmeriCorps is supposed to be about.



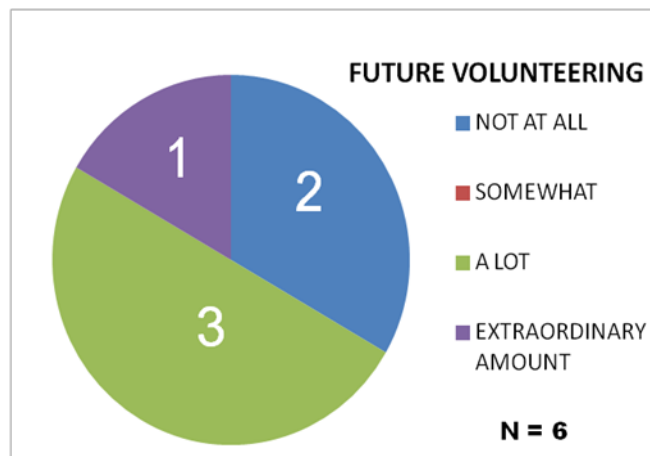
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**



**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- The thing I miss the most is walking in every morning and being greeted by the adults, just seeing them happy to see you. Knowing the kinds of lives they lead.
- Helping a participant learn boundaries and make new friends.
- I was able to get a child who normally stands in class not participating to actually sit down and work with clay. The reason it brings a smile is because she seemed interested but it took many weeks to finally get her to work. This made me feel great because it meant she trusted me enough to try something new.
- My biggest accomplishment this year was in expanding my relationship with BQ, an AFA participant who uses the Laser Art Technique (LAT) system to create his paintings. LAT is a tremendous resource for artists who lack the mobility that an able-bodied artist relies on to execute paintings and drawings. As a tracker for BQ, I have served, when at my best, as a conduit for his artistic intentions, and believe that my efforts are providing the ideal accommodation for BQ to make his artistic intentions a reality.
- My children, just seeing them grow and seeing what accomplishment I am making on raising them.
- Connecting with the participants.

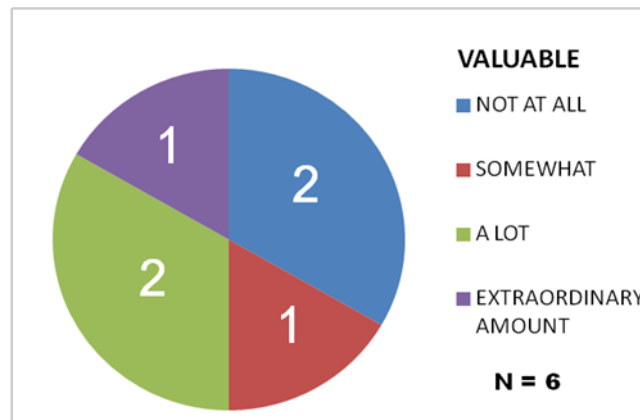
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**



**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I would be interested in volunteering in the future for AmeriCorps Alum, but I would not want to sign a contract that obligates me to serve a certain amount of hours.
- I am contemplating applying for another volunteer position working with kids but I am still unsure. However, I am positive I will continue volunteering my time in the future.
- I intend to continue as a staff direct support professional with Arts for All for the immediate future, as there are still accomplishments and discoveries I would like to make in the AFA context.
- Whatever comes my way
- At the moment I have no plans but if there is an opportunity for me to help my community I will do it.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**

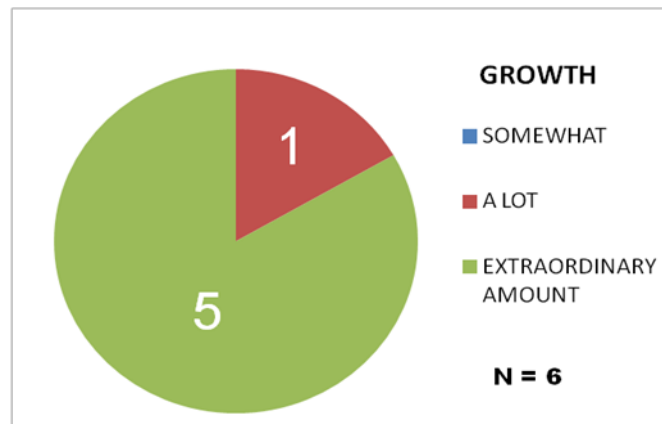


**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

- I have decided the route I want to take in my life because of the people I have met through AmeriCorps.
- This has given me hands on experience in a field I know is for me.
- My experiences as a direct support professional and art teacher have given me considerable resources to put toward graduate studies in art education, with or without a leveraged specialty in special education.
- Just teaching me how to help others and giving out the helping hand that people do deserve.

**EXIT FEEDBACK**  
**COCONINO RURAL ENVIRONMENT CORPS**

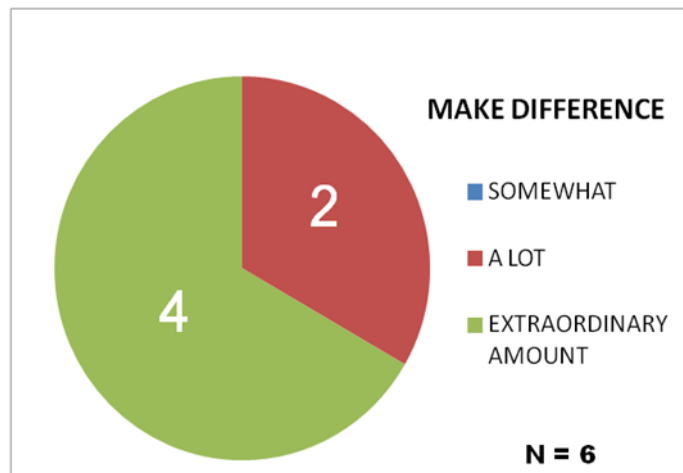
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**



**Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.**

- I've discovered what I love to do, but also what I dislike about what I love to do. I love working outside and meeting project partners and knowing and sometimes seeing the impact I'm making on the environment around me. I dislike the pain I'm sometimes in, the tiredness, the sometimes monotonous work. So I've found that I love it and sometimes what you love is what hurts the most.
- Meeting a diversity of people, and doing things out of my comfort norm.
- Commitment: I wanted to leave so many times but I just stuck it out and I'd say that is what has made me grow the most.
- The challenges this year made me much stronger mentally and physically. Also negotiating projects with other crew members and learning new skills. Our crew became very close and this improved the quality of our work. I have grown a lot this year and feel much more confident in myself.
- Pushing myself physically, learning to take direction, working as a team, and being part of a supportive, passionate community. Ex: Going from no-saw experiences to working on hazard projects.
- Becoming an ACL. Helping lead six new corps members has challenged me in new ways and I have learned a great deal about myself from my shared experiences with each member.

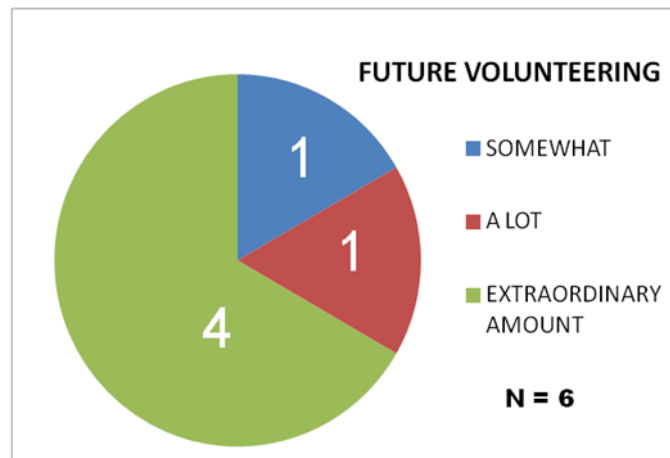
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**



**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- We did a back country spike 5 or so miles back and on the last day I hiked out (mostly uphill) with the biggest sense of pride and success I'd had all term. The first day in I felt like I couldn't do it so knowing that I not only did it, but with a smile on my face, made my smile that much bigger.
- Felling a tree with a crosscut. It was challenging, and stimulating.
- Finishing YCC because I know that the experiences I gave them they will never forget.
- I'm proud of a trail re-route that we did on our second spike. It felt good because it was so difficult and I learned so much doing that work. The quality of the final product was great due to the effort we put into learning and the guidance from our crew leader.
- There have been many. I get especially happy thinking about the last day of a difficult spike. That feeling of relief and pride that comes after a week of hard work.
- Surviving Apache Sitgreaves without getting poison ivy. We worked in so much of it for many spikes and I never caught it.

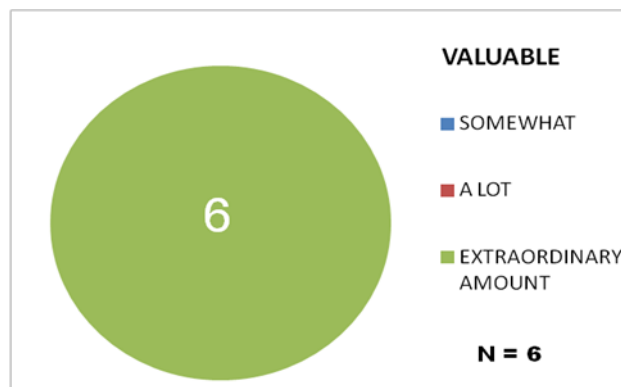
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**



**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- Community service has always been something that I've loved doing because I like to make others happy without them needing to offer me anything. I think now that I know programs like CREC exist, I'll be seeking out more conservation volunteer work and try to expand my love to others around me.
- I intend to volunteer wherever I can provide a minimal subsistence for myself while helping others as often as I can.
- I would like to start teaching at the Portland Free School.
- I am looking into several different options for my free time, but I'm also starting a new Americorps volunteer term currently.
- I will be in college, so I plan on doing volunteer work that has to do with my major in sustainable agriculture.
- I would really be interested in outdoor volunteer events. Keeping parks clean or opening up new nature trails would be ideal.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**

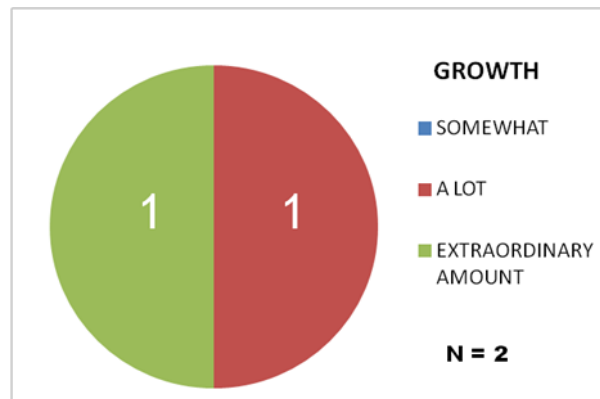


**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

- I feel so much stronger as an individual now that I've moved across the country to live outside for half of the time. I think future employers will be impressed by the perseverance and sheer determination that a person must have to willingly put themselves in uncomfortable situations and come out smiling.
- I have moved from an AmeriCorps position to a paid parks position based directly on my AmeriCorps experience.
- I would love to stay in the line of outdoor work
- I have gained a lot of skills: both hard skills like rock work and chainsaw and soft skills like leadership and communication. I think these will help me a lot in whatever career I pursue. I feel more connected to the land and people of Arizona and I consider that to be a very positive thing.
- I am now saw-trained, with many saw hours under my belt. This is useful for joining fuel crews. I also think that my supervisor would give me a great reference for any job I wish to go after.
- I definitely believe AmeriCorps has paved a way for future employment. It's a challenging but rewarding experience from which I have learned enumerable lessons about life, myself, and giving back.

**EXIT FEEDBACK**  
**COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF ARIZONA:**  
**ELIMINATING ROADBLOCKS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS**

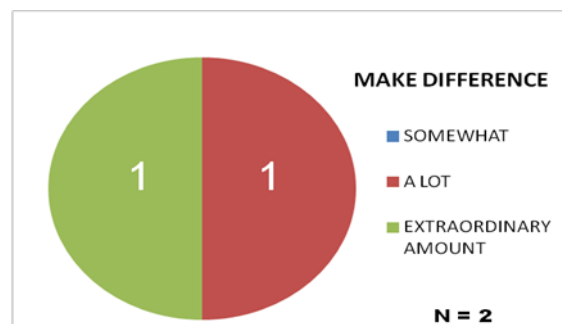
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**



**Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.** (Note: only one narrative response.)

- Opportunity to make a difference by eliminating roadblocks to learning and to enabling parents to keep their children in school by linking them with the community support they so desperately needed.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**



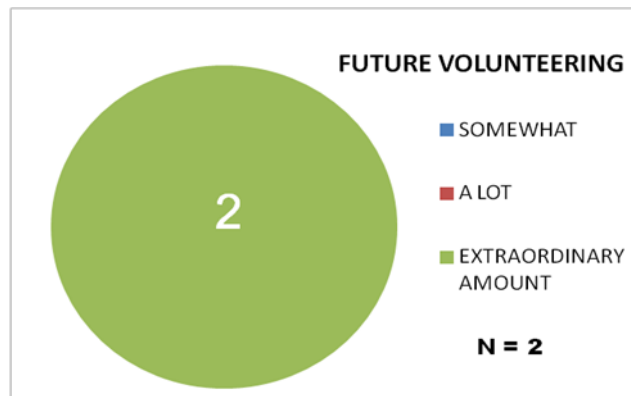
**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- There are so many that it is difficult to choose just one. Perhaps the most interesting is that I helped a student complete their AmeriCorps application and he was accepted! Normally, this wouldn't be so remarkable, except that this particular young man was in the special education program and benefited greatly from my help, insight and expertise in completing his application. Knowing that he had a desire to serve his community and that I was able to help him accomplish that brings a smile to my face every time.



- Coordinating a health fair for women which resulted in 212 moms getting health services they had been denied...including mammograms for women identified as at risk.....several potential life threatening conditions were identified and treated

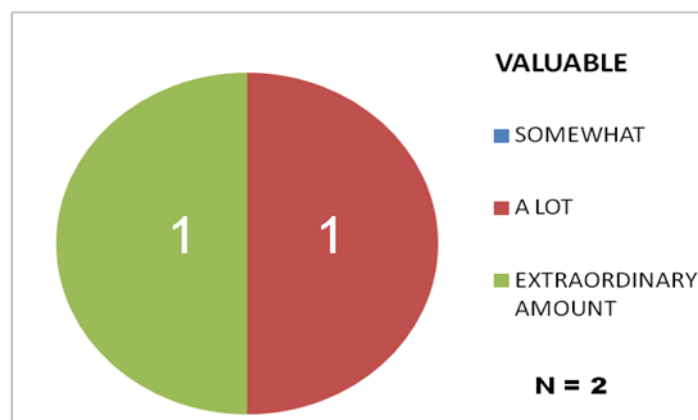
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**



**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I am currently employed as the community representative at Pueblo High School. But, if I ever have free time, then I will certainly seek out opportunities to volunteer at free medical clinics on the south side of Tucson, University Medical Center, and the GED office on the Pascua Yaqui reservation. Next year, I might even have the opportunity to serve in Africa or Latin America with the Global Health Corps.
- Signed up for a second year of service.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**

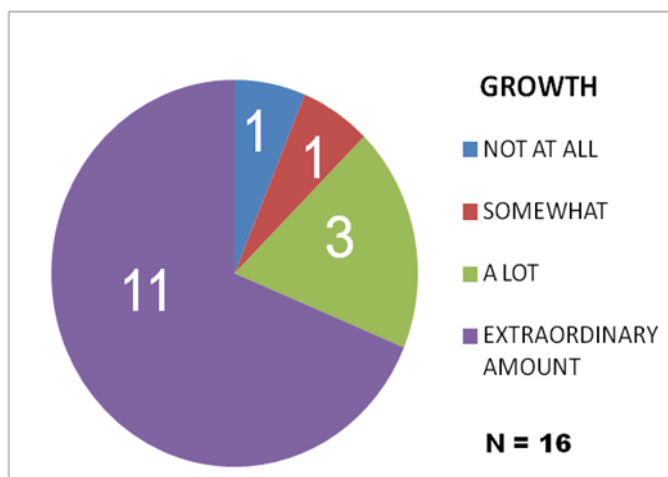


**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?** (Note: only one narrative response.)

- I have a wealth of community resources knowledge and continue to link parents with the support they need to keep their children in school ....to give them the education they deserve, my programs help students achieve in life.

**EXIT FEEDBACK  
MESA UNITED WAY:  
OPERATION SECOND WIND**

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**

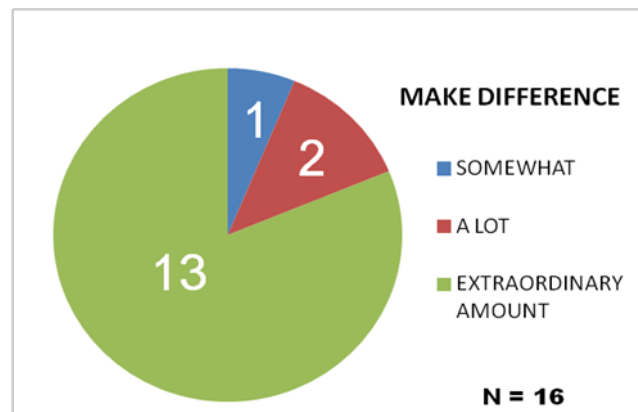


**Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.**

- I had never worked for a non-profit before. It has been an experience: working with people and learning a lot about different programs...
- I have learned so much about local resources that I never knew existed! And to match someone who needs them with the resources is a bonus. Just when I think, "Why do I need to know this?" a person who needs the service will walk through the door. I've worked with a very diverse clientele, from social program referrals, to neighborhood people, to people from my own church and neighborhood. I love the whole experience of working with an individual to create a resume, help them apply for jobs, and then hearing that they got one!
- In such a devastated economy, and the great disadvantage of the population that I worked with, I derived a wonderful sense of accomplishment when I helped to empower a homeless woman to find the courage and belief that would change her circumstances and her life.
- I was able to volunteer at an agency that does such amazing work. We are helping homeless families to remain together, keeping the family unit intact while providing job and education assistance, as well as childcare and other services. I have come to understand that homelessness is cross-cultural, and that good, hard-working folks can face unexpected hardships that end in homelessness and often hopelessness. That is why we are there, offering tools to fix what's broken, and empowering families to become self-supporting.
- A hug from grandmother raising grand children, smiles on children's faces, and giving books that may help reading in children and take them to a new level.

- We have served more than twice the families this year as we did last year. We see a great need for the community here in Mesa and expect it to grow even more as foster families become aware of Helen's Hope Chest. I get so much more from the kids than they get from me. I had 2 sets of brothers last week and in both cases the older brother gave the little brothers items they had chosen for themselves. They are the most selfless children because they are thankful for anything they get.
- Learning the policy and procedures for the two programs that I was assigned to work. Meeting the people that needed support and help grow the program. I was not aware so many people that needed services and support lived in my hometown. It was a very positive growth experience for me.
- Working with foster children and seeing what the little we can do for them brings happiness.
- I'm in the process of learning a new skill with my mentor.
- Looking back at the year, what has made it a positive growth experience for me is that for one thing my computer skills have been enhanced tremendously.
- Understanding and gaining knowledge of how nonprofits operate. For example, understanding where grants and funding come from so that nonprofits can continue to operate.
- The staff members of La Mesita, whom I worked with. The office manager, support partners, and case manager whom I worked with directly shared many insights about homelessness with me.
- I learned better communication skills and learned to work with a variety of personality types, which I believe will allow me to better adapt to future work environments.
- I participated in the Project Connect this year. This program was an inspiration to me. It gave me insight in how to provide resources to homeless men in our community.
- The people that I was involved with, both co-workers and clients.
- I must not be so enthusiastic

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**

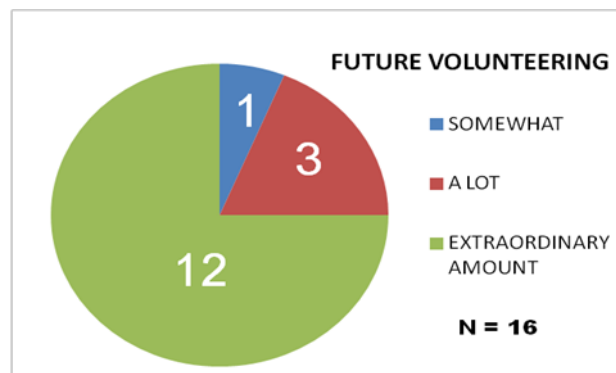


**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- Simply, I love the smile that comes across an individual's face when he/she looks at a new resume. They come in saying they've never worked or have no skills, and after we talk through who they are and what they've done, they look at a print copy, and say, "This is me? Wait until my wife (or my mom, etc.) sees it!" Also, seeing those who know little about computers, become more proficient and more independent from my help, is really fulfilling. They didn't merely fill out an application, they became computer literate!
- Delivering Christmas gifts and seeing children smile.
- I have assisted many homeless women to find housing, apply for services that they very much needed, and find employment; but the most rewarding memory for me was when one of the participants signed up to see me in case management one night. When she came in, she said: " I didn't need to speak with you tonight, I just wanted to say thank you" as she hugged me with tears in her eyes, and showed me that she had gotten her section 8 voucher that I had worked with on by getting the information needed, writing letters and communicating with the section 8 worker via e-mail and phone for several weeks.
- Hearing from our job coordinator that seven parents had secured full-time employment while utilizing our career and child care centers. I was able to hold and rock and play with babies and toddlers while mommies were busy becoming purposeful and productive.
- Helping a young lady find outfits or helping a first-time foster mom find items for the foster child.
- I like to use the money you pay me to buy for the kids. When I see the kids smile at something they picked out that I purchased, that makes me very happy. I pay a lot of attention to our teen girls because it is especially important for them to fit in and wear what their peers wear.
- Knowing that I helped someone and they smiled at me and said thank you so very much, made me put on a very big smile.
- Making kids smile always brings a smile to my face.

- Being able to help someone in need that brings a smile to my face. I feel good helping others.
- Working with low income residents, it probably was being able to offer a word of encouragement in their down times.
- Seeing students from Arizona complete their education goals with the help of grants and saving their own money to use towards paying for an education.
- The appreciation of the homeless residents I worked with. Many of them hugged and thanked me for my support when they left the program.
- Successfully overseeing the completion of a campaign with Groupon.
- Seeing my work done and the joy on the people faces.
- Working with the children, using my experience, and winning the confidence of the parents and children.
- Appreciation from the clients

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**

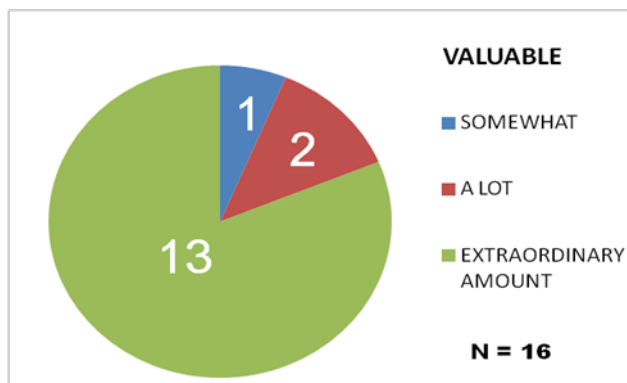


**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I am continuing for a second year with Americorps. I have entered a Stephen Minister's training program at my church, and increasing musical and leadership opportunities in my church groups.
- Stay with the program.
- I feel very capable of providing wonderful community services, but I have recently married and I am not sure of my plans for the future right now.
- I plan to continue volunteering for many years to come. I have received so much more than I have given. I go to my service site each day excited and happy for what the day will bring!
- Staying with Helen's Hope Chest and doing taxes plus I might look for one other volunteer job.
- I hope to stay on at Helen's Hope Chest. I love helping the kids.
- I plan to continue to volunteer or provide community services next year part time only.
- I am continuing my work with the foster care system together with working in the VITA program.
- I plan on continuing volunteering and perhaps majoring in Sociology.
- Through both AmeriCorps and my church (an upcoming mission trip), I will be volunteering and providing community service. I hope to be able to serve others as long as humanly possible.
- I have signed up for another year (950 hours) of service at the same organization
- I plan to serve as a volunteer with the homeless shelter for another year.
- I have renewed my contract with my AmeriCorps program for 2012-2013 because I thoroughly enjoyed my work experience. I plan on volunteering with groups in the future, wherever I may end up.
- Hoping to keep volunteering for as long as possible.

- I intend to continue working as a volunteer with Helen's Hope Chest.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**



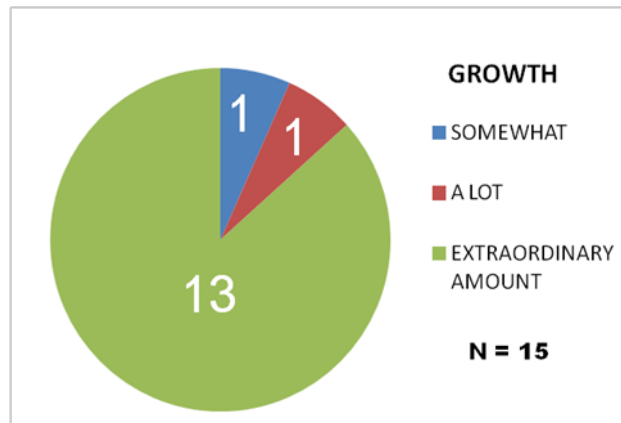
**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

- My experience has excited me and renewed my passion for involvement. They've reminded me that we all need helping, non-judgmental people in our lives to pick out our good qualities.
- Having served as a case manager to homeless women, I have gained a great wealth of resource knowledge that can help many people, whether or not I am employed or serve in the community. I feel I will continue to be sought out for the knowledge long after my service in Americorps has ended.
- I am a part of the inner-workings of a leading non-profit in the community. We are currently in the process of expansion. It's exciting to see how we have grown to help even more families in need.
- It gave me more of a understanding that there are many people who need help and many ways one can help. There is a big need to encourage young people to read and to continue their education.
- I see that even one person with the right attitude can make a difference to so many.
- I will continue to support my community when I can as a volunteer.
- By providing me with good people skills, listening, customer service and working with many different and diverse people have helped me and I think as a community as a whole.
- My AmeriCorps experiences have expanded my ability to love and care for others in my community.
- Employment opportunities in Arizona are slim. As a volunteer I have kept my skills up-to-date so that when an opportunity does arise I can show current skill sets on my application/resume.
- I have gained a clearer understanding of the misfortunes people suffer and how they affect them.
- My AmeriCorps experience has helped me adapt by thrusting me into environments with a variety of situations and personality types. This will allow me to adapt much faster to future work environments.
- Great experience in a large field of work skills.
- It allows me to experience an effective participation with my new community.



**EXIT FEEDBACK  
NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY:  
YOUTH IN ACTION**

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**



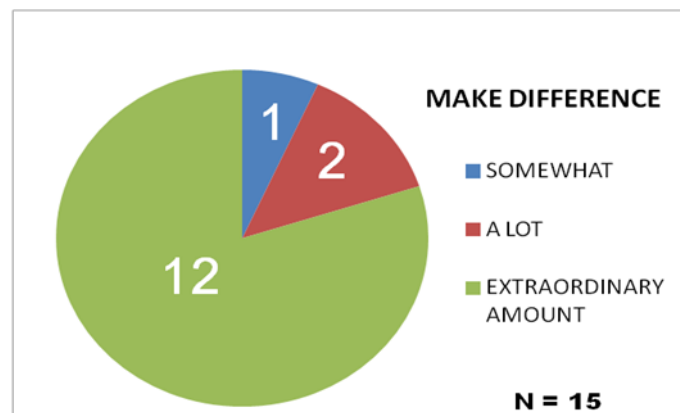
**Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.**

- The first three years of college were spent in my dorm focusing on academics. I didn't get out much; therefore, joining America Reads and AmeriCorps provided me the chance to get out and actually help others in the process. I made new friends in the America Reads program and some in AmeriCorps through Project Give.
- Serving as an AmeriCorps member has allowed me to get a lot of great hands on experience. It has allowed me to meet many other people with similar interests to my own and has allowed me to learn a great deal of information about what kinds of opportunities exist out there in my field.
- Working directly with youth from a background very different from myself allowed me to more fully understand the experience of those less privileged. This is a life-changing realization.
- I feel personal growth begins at the end of one's comfort zone. This past year I had ample opportunities to take on leadership roles that I had never done before (or received training for). An example would be calling and holding meetings between teachers and parents at an elementary school. I was not a teacher at that school or a parent. So, it was quite uncomfortable to be the leader of such organizing. However, that created a sense of empowerment in me and in my abilities to be an effective leader.
- Watching all my friends and family show interest and support of my position at the Arboretum was very inspiring. It makes me feel like I am on the right track because I want to become educated in naturopathy and use native plants to help people and animals.
- This Americorps term I did not receive much mentoring at all because it was not needed. Instead I took on the roll of actively mentoring others.
- My appointment to the Bear Jaw Fire & Fuels Management crew here in Flagstaff, AZ provided for many opportunities to learn about wild-land firefighting techniques and behaviors, many chances to

become more physically fit, and many experiences that challenged and developed my mental willpower and determination.

- The opportunity to work in the Arts in Flagstaff has so drastically changed my passions for the better. A year and a half ago, I was a fresh college graduate with little direction for my professional life. Working at Flagstaff Cultural Partners has given me the chance to see artists and art supporters make a tremendous positive impact on the community. I have been so inspired, and I count this experience as one of the most formative of my young life.
- The positive growth experience came with those I met and learning things that I didn't have experience with previously.
- I grew in so many ways, professionally, emotionally, and personally. Working with a small arts organization really helped me understand what I want to do with my life, what the community needs, and what is or is not available to a community like Flagstaff.
- What made this AmeriCorps experience positive was that I learned many new things I did not know before.
- Great learning experience.
- All events with AmeriCorps made it a positive experience for me, especially while helping people and the environment.
- I gained confidence in public speaking through docent training, leading field trips and tours.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**

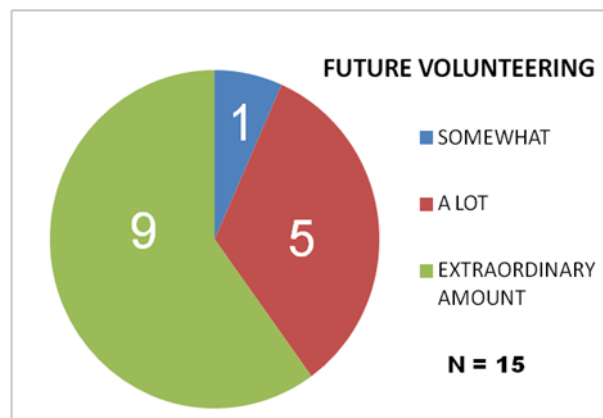


**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- Knowing that I've been working hard to protect the Mexican Spotted Owl is extremely gratifying to me. It feels great to be making real change.
- It is difficult to pick just one accomplishment, but I would have to say it is the knowledge that I really connected with my students. I had a parent tell me that his six year old son only likes reading with me at tutoring. This is the same boy who on the first day of tutoring, hid in a trash can because he was scared of me. It puts a smile on my face to know that my students enjoy meeting with me every week.

- Seeing the construction of a school garden from start to finish this summer was a huge accomplishment. When I see the plants growing, I think of all the fun experiences I shared with the students with whom I worked.
- Organizing parents, at times, was like "pulling teeth". They are already so busy, and asking them to take time to meet with other parents and teachers was very difficult. But, at an end of the semester event (with tons of free pizza), the parents came, made connections, and wanted to get involved. It's not so much a smile that comes to my face but rather a sigh of relief that my hope for people actively wanting to make the world a better place has been validated.
- What brings a smile is probably the compounded effect of all the plants I have watched get sick and grow back even stronger. It shows the vitality of the desert plants and of life in general.
- Stopping the southwestern flank of the Gladiator fire in Crown King, AZ this past May 2012. If it weren't for the efforts of all the wild-land crews on that particular division assignment, our Bear Jaw Fuels crew included, the fire may well have burned all the way up to, and through, Prescott, AZ.
- The Viola Awards were definitely my favorite accomplishment during my year at FCP. Seeing over 500 community members come together to support the people, artists and organizations that FCP strives every day to support—it was the most beautiful experience I had working here.
- I gained animal-handling experience in helping with the wildlife program.
- Artists and visitors coming to our Arts Center and being happy with what they see, learning something, seeing something new, and being supportive of an arts venue that is totally free.
- I went in knowing nothing about AmeriCorps. Throughout my term I've done volunteer work, and now understand what AmeriCorps is all about.
- Working on the Keepseel national monument: Seeing the heritage.
- Seeing the progress of my students in their language abilities.
- I finished.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**

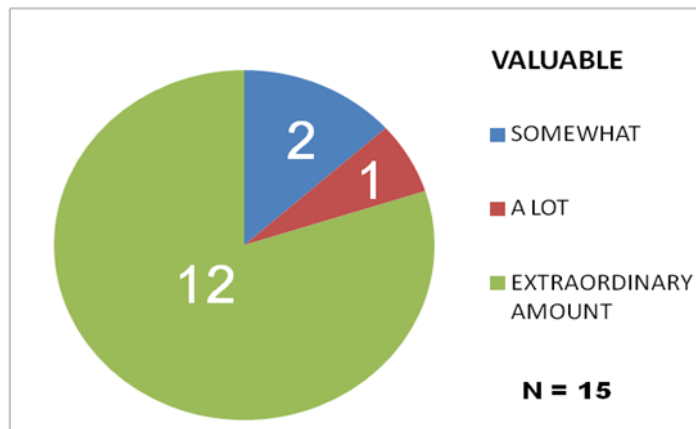


**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I will be staying at NAU for Graduate School; therefore, I hope to continue volunteering around Flagstaff at places like the Flagstaff Family Food Center and Royal Inn. I also intend to continue being a part of Save Our Peaks and Relay for Life. I might even continue doing tutoring of fellow students, if I have the time.
- Right now I am considering going to do a working holiday in New Zealand. I'm still in the initial stages of researching what all would be involved to make this happen. I have considered volunteering with the World Wide Organization for Organic Farmers in the past, so I may end up doing that.
- I will continue to serve the elementary schools where I was working this past year as an AmeriCorps volunteer. I hope to continue with AmeriCorps days of service as they come up in the future.
- I will always "volunteer". It is each person's civic duty to help one another. Apathy increases with individualism. Striking a balance between the collective/community and the individual is essential for a healthy interdependent relationship with the world.
- I have all ready begun my lifelong dream of working with horses and the people who love and need help taking care of them. I hope to continue this and someday be part of an organization that helps displaced horses and people come together to create positive connections and growth.
- I plan to continue volunteering with the Grand Canyon Trust and also Flagstaff Biking Organization.
- I would like to participate in and complete another 900 hour AmeriCorps term with the Bear Jaw Fire & Fuels Management crew in the future. I would specifically like to start another term with the crew at the start of next fire season, April 2013.
- I'm staying on at FCP as a part-time AmeriCorps member for the next service year.
- I've maxed out my AmeriCorps education award, so, I'm hoping I'll be motivated enough to do some volunteer stuff here and there when I have time. I opted to remain on the volunteer mailing list for the Arboretum and for AmeriCorps, so I'm sure I'll be around.

- I hope to always be involved in my community. I have recently moved and will be attending graduate school, so I have not solidified my volunteer plans. However, I do hope to continue to work in the arts.
- I will try to volunteer as much as I can.
- I would like to be a part of conservation trips both this year and in the future.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**



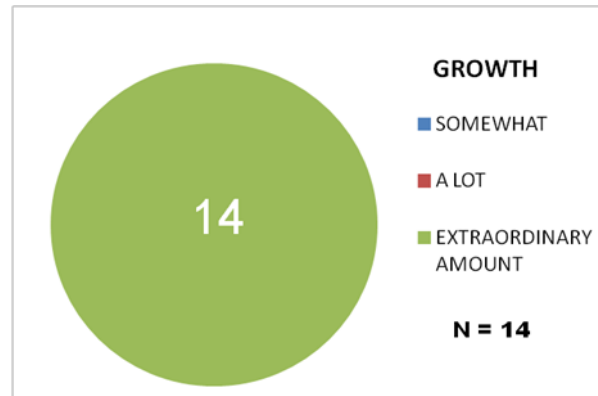
**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

- Yes, I am getting experience and training that is sought after for many of the positions with federal land management agencies that I would be interested in doing in the future.
- I'm not sure about future employment, aside from showing that I care about my community and love volunteering. My time in AmeriCorps has definitely forced me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to see more of Flagstaff than I had in my first three years of college.
- My AmeriCorps position allowed me to establish relationships in the local community and create a network in Flagstaff that would have been difficult or impossible otherwise.
- Two ways: Internally and externally—personal growth/empowerment and resume building, respectively.
- It has affirmed my interests and strengthened my drive to explore the world.
- My role as an AmeriCorps member gave me additional opportunities to network.
- My AmeriCorps experience with the Bear Jaw Fire & Fuels Management crew provided me with ample opportunities to network within the EMS and public service communities here in Flagstaff, AZ.
- I took a few part-time positions at local galleries and for local organizations that I would never have been exposed to if not for my position at FCP.

- I really hope employers look at my work from the past three years and see it as socially and environmentally valuable, thereby making me a more wanted candidate.
- I had the great opportunity afforded to me to work as an assistant gallery director. This will directly, and has directly, impacted my life. I hope to continue my career in the arts and the Center has set me on a wonderful path.
- With the low income i was receiving through AmeriCorps, I had to cut down on things I didn't need and manage money better.
- Yes, this experience has provided with great fundamentals for future work experience.
- I don't know yet, but I am sure that my first term and now my second term will help me tremendously.
- My experience has not yet helped with future employment, but it has expanded my sense of community by involving me with people that I otherwise would not have met.

**EXIT FEEDBACK**  
**PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE:**  
**PIMA ADULT & FAMILY LITERACY CORPS**

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**

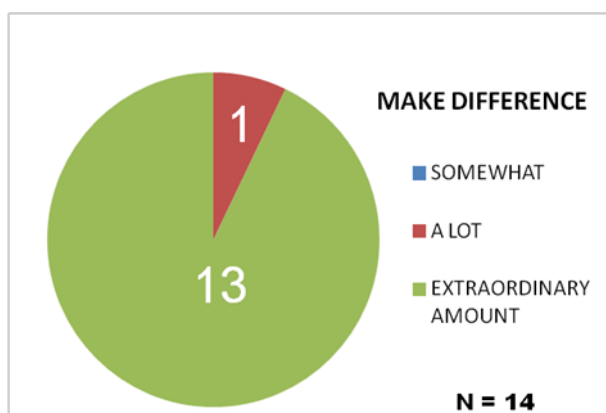


**Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.**

- A positive growth that I experienced was the time that I was helping out in the Digital Storytelling Film Festival we had on May 2012. The fact that I was included and asked for help in this major event made me realized people trust me with my skills.
- All of the events that I was a part of made a positive growth on me because I am able to continue making connections with the community and continue my service even after completing my year with the AmeriCorps program.
- It was a good experience working in a preschool, it really help me because I would like to be a teacher.
- All of the training and connections I made with fellow members. I truly enjoyed how connected I was with this group and with all the service projects we completed.
- Thanks to AmeriCorps, my first year service made me grow serving my community in different ways: working in a group we have to be one, sharing responsibilities, skills, knowledge and it is very important to have communication. This year has been very productive for me and others because I found very important programs to help my community so I could help a lot of people.
- My first year as an AmeriCorps member was incredible because I could help integrate several students to be leaders in the community.
- My first year in AmeriCorps has been growing me in different areas. In this year I have learned what kind of the needs my community has and how we as leaders and as volunteers can help them. We had a lot of incredible projects on which we worked all together as a team and we accomplished a lot of beautiful things.

- When I came into conflict with some members who disagreed with what should be done and how. I was able to help solve the problem and let go and not hold a grudge.
- The tools and training, such as goal setting and time management, have had a really great impact on my daily life. I have been able to get more done in shorter amounts of time than ever before.
- A positive growth experience for me was the trust I was given by my coordinator to plan, organize and execute projects throughout the year. For example, in the month of May, an AmeriCorps member organized a film festival with her Family Literacy students. She was super busy and needed help to ask for donations. I jumped in and I was trusted to make the connections in the community to fulfill this goal. It was rewarding to see the film festival succeed and know that I was part of it.
- The support and unification of the team is what made it a positive growth experience for me. Having weekly meetings to stay connected, informed and trained is an example of how I received support.
- All the support of members and staff, also all the trainings that we had in order to be better prepared in the classroom made everything easier and that was part of the great experience.
- I have been tutoring people. Being able to see their faces light up when they are able to understand something and not feel as frustrated makes me happy to continue giving my time to my community.
- AmeriCorps has allowed me to become a more active college student and volunteer. For example, it has made me want to participate in more college volunteer projects and student clubs. In addition, it has also made me become more active within my community.
- Through rich AmeriCorps program experiences, I have more empathy and patience. As a result, I feel and see that it makes the activities I engage in more rewarding for the beneficiaries and their close relations.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**



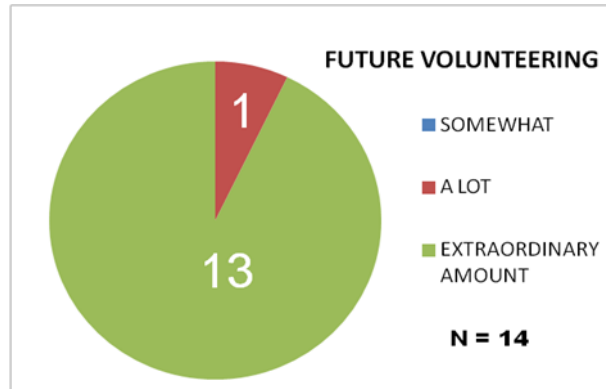
**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- I was part of LeaderCorps this year and we were able to accomplish a state conference that was successful and gave me the biggest smile because I was challenged and I learned a lot. I feel very confident now.



- One single accomplishment is the connection I made and with some of the people i worked with. My smile is because I have made permanent friends and connections I will always have and cherish.
- That I helped a lot of people. I learned many things from them and also they learned things from me.
- The digital story project that we did with the Santa Rosa students because it was interesting to see how the grand finale made the students smile. They were happy and all dressed up for their "Gala" and they thanked me and acknowledged that it was all worth it—this spoke volumes to me.
- To be a coach in United Way has been the most incredible achievement for me in helping youth.
- It was working with great leaders and learning from them. For example, when we celebrated the Literacy and Adult Education week, we had the opportunity to meet people in power (PCC administrators).
- I have had many accomplishments this year. I have helped people with different needs, I was working in the Adult Education civics program as a former student, but now I had the opportunity to help in other ways to people in the community. I continue helping ESL students with problems in grammar, and when I see the students' faces and they give thanks, it feeds my soul.
- To see what education can offer to people.
- Feeding the homeless was awesome. I saw an immediate result from my labor.
- AmeriCorps week brings the biggest smile to my face because I was able to meet new people in the community as my AmeriCorps team helped in all the projects. It was truly an accomplishment.
- The single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile is completing the digital stories of the Santa Rosa Family Literacy Site, because seeing the students complete this project and see their final result was priceless.
- Serving on the graduation committee and planning the graduation. Every member was made to realize the great job that each one of us had done and to appreciate everything we accomplished in our year of service.
- Being able to reach people out in the community that I would not cross paths with if I was not in AmeriCorps makes me smile. Especially when I have done a good deed for them and they are grateful. It makes me feel good to be able to help somebody with a simple action. And smiling helps them to feel appreciated and valued. So when everyone is smiling, it makes the community a better place.
- The single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to my face is when I participated in Tucson's Hope Fest. The reason why I smiled was because I was amazed at how many homeless people and families we helped that day; it made me very proud to be identified as an AmeriCorps member.
- Relationships with beneficiaries and their response to my work have often been very rewarding. Love and appreciation are constant in a thousand ways.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**

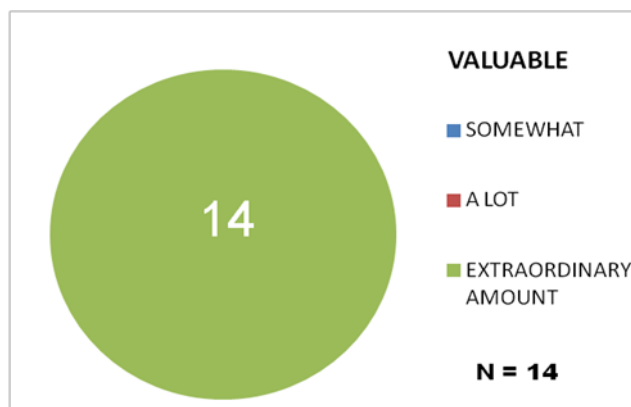


**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I plan to continue in AmeriCorps hopefully in the Family Literacy program. My service has been done in the adult learning centers and entering this Family Literacy program will allow me to grow more as a volunteer and future teacher.
- I will continue to volunteer in my community.
- I would like to continue volunteering at my school.
- To be a coach in United Way has been the most incredible achievement for me in helping the youth. I will recruit more tutors for United Way, help more students, and work in the hospital as a volunteer. All this will help me in my future career.
- My plan for the future is to continue recruiting students for civics programs in Adult Education.
- I will move to Colorado and I have applied to AmeriCorps there. I hope to continue helping people there as well as continue helping my community. I will also continue with my education.
- Staying involved in my children's school so that I can be involved in the community.
- I plan to come back to AmeriCorps for another year.
- In the next year, I plan to extend my community service towards the career I am working on. I also want to learn the needs in my community and be able to solve them as a volunteer.
- My plans for next year are to join the PCCFL Corps on their days of service and help out whenever I can.—along with doing another AmeriCorps term.
- I will keep serving the community by volunteering at the hospital.
- I am continuing with AmeriCorps this coming year and I look forward to the volunteer possibilities that it will bring.

- My plan for next year is to volunteer at the Community Food Bank and the University of Arizona Medical Center. Also, I plan on volunteering at Pima Community College Student Life.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**



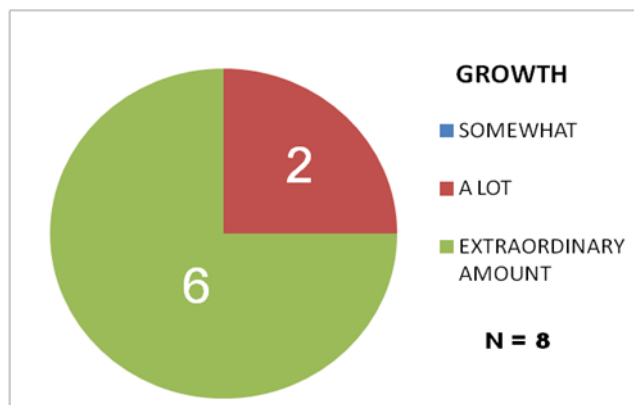
**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

- AmeriCorps has opened many doors. Through the national services and service learning projects I have created strong networks in the community and I have gotten to know it too. Also, I feel capable and comfortable to aim for a career and not just a fast food restaurant job.
- With the network that I have created and the people I have meet in my community, I will be able to refer back to my experience and this will help my employment opportunities.
- AmeriCorps open doors on the path toward my future career as a social worker. It also may help me to get a job in the hospital.
- My experience has been important in my professional life because I would like to attended college to get a degree as an advisor in Adult Education.
- My first AmeriCorps year has given me a lot experiences; for example, about all the state programs that exist and how they can help the community.
- I am hoping that employers will be looking for people who care about their community and are proactive. Being part of AmeriCorps says a lot.
- Yes definitely! The experiences I created in AmeriCorps have helped me explore different roles in the community and I have created connections that will help me in my future employment.
- By providing me with the necessary tools and training to pursue employment or community roles.
- It helped me as a guide in deciding what my next steps were in order to continue my education. It also provided me with trainings that are very helpful when finding a job.
- I feel more confident and knowledgeable and I know more people that are working in the field I would like to work in.

- My experience in AmeriCorps has provided me with life skills like time management, networking and critical thinking skills that I will need for future employment. In addition, AmeriCorps has also expanded my role as a volunteer within the community.

**EXIT FEEDBACK**  
**PIMA PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP:**  
**THE PARTNERSHIP AMERICORPS PROJECT**

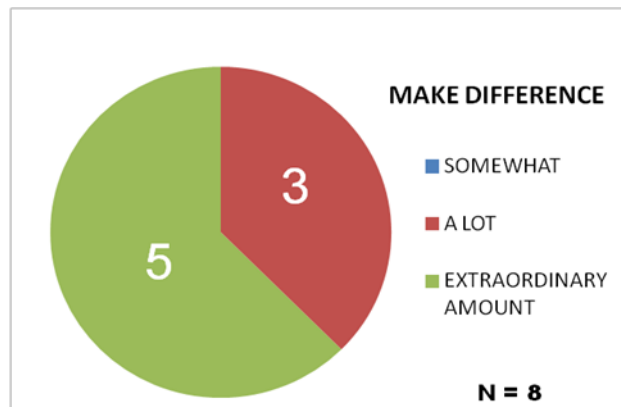
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**



**Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.**

- The ability to help others. I've been able to work with teens in helping them find jobs and be prepared for life after high school. I feel I may have made a small difference in some of their lives.
- Being pushed out of my comfort zone; being given multiple responsibilities.
- Learning the inner workings of non-profit organizations.
- Having seen the ability that many of us have to make a positive impact on people, especially young children and teens motivated me to do my best to put a smile on people. Being able to provide time, effort and tutoring to young teenagers who are in desperate need of it. (Summer Mentor Program)
- See the children that I worked with graduate. Knowing that if it weren't for me and AmeriCorps, these kids would have not graduated high school.
- Gaining experience with a variety of children in different subjects.
- Just the opportunity to connect with youth in a meaningful way on a regular basis made this experience rewarding. The chance to act as a positive role model for others was great.

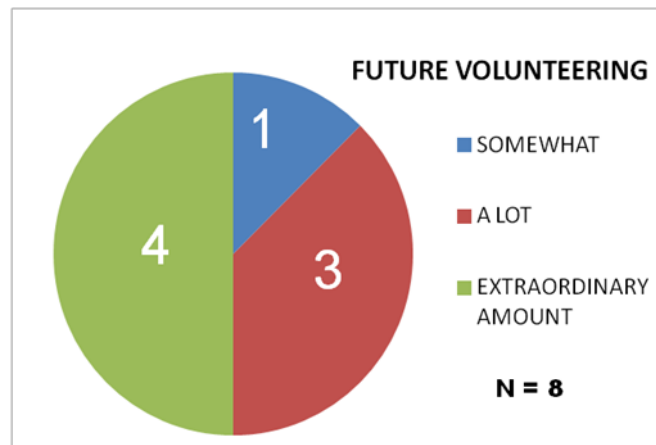
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**



**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- The Teen Awareness Month event done by the PALS kids. This event showed the young leaders that they too can provide help to their peers and can make a difference in other people's lives.
- Improving my class room management skills.
- Being a part of a student's application process to college, helping him with his grades, and seeing him get into college. I was just happy to have made a difference.
- Seeing the 8th grade social studies class making arguments based off of evidence. The smile is because I taught them to base their argument off of facts and I also provided them with the assignment to do so. This is a life skill they will carry with them that will serve them well.
- All eight of the seniors I worked with during my first semester graduated.

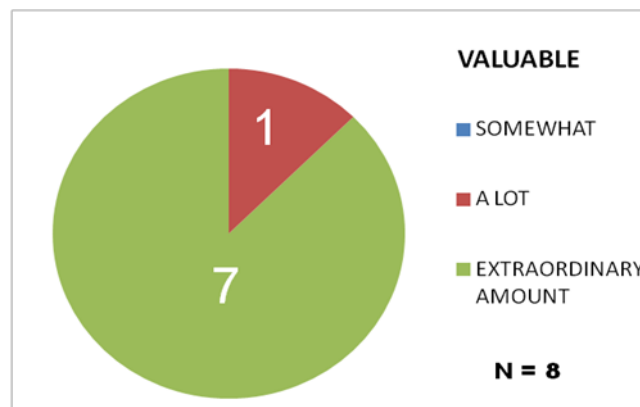
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**



**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I am currently working full-time with a local non-profit agency, managing volunteers and providing mentoring services.
- If I have the time I would be happy to volunteer more. I am doing some more community service through the job I have now at the school.
- Look for fulfilling ways to serve.
- I will continue to volunteer through my church like I have done my entire life.
- I plan on continuing my service in anywhere needed, I am also considering a second term if possible. In my future I plan to motivate others to volunteer and lend a hand to those who are in need.
- I will be joining a volunteer ambulance company.
- Next year I will try volunteering in more schools in the Phoenix area where I will be going to college. In the future I would like to be involved in getting students better resources whether through a campaign or fund raising.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**

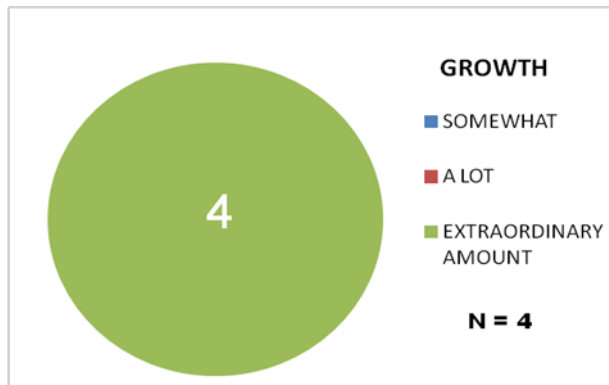


**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

- The position I held at the school through AmeriCorps has been written into the grant to become a position through the school and I currently hold that job.
- AmeriCorps experiences have given me the experience working with youth, volunteers, schools and adults necessary for my current job. Having not had these AC experiences, I most likely would not be working in my career area right now.
- Shows my willingness to work with the less fortunate.
- It has greatly opened a pathway for my future employment in my career. I intend helping teens and families by going into the field of Social Work. This experience has helped inform me and gave me more options of what kinds of services I can focus on.
- AmeriCorps has provided me with a heck of a reference for future jobs.
- It provided me with experience with children with IEP's as well as managing IEP's themselves—which only assured my passion for special education.

## EXIT FEEDBACK THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?



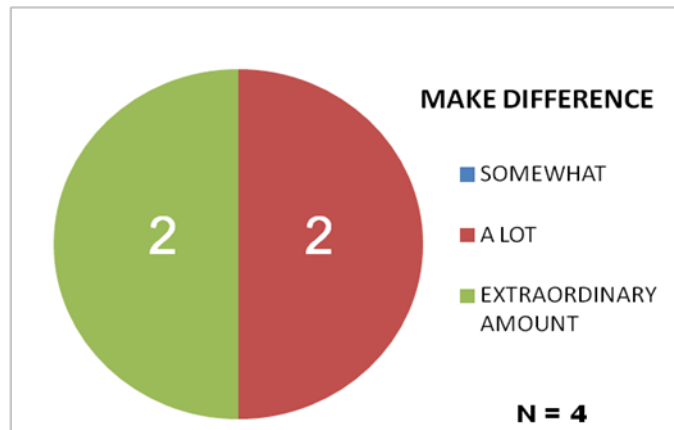
Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.

- Learning about what it takes to be a preserve manager was a great experience. Learning their personal stories and what motivates them was important since in some ways land managers are working with a never-ending problem. While their work is usually done against the clock, the ways they manipulate nature are clearly done with a patient attitude.
- With every project, I learned something new that helped me grow in my career choice.
- I entered this year with high expectations for this job--I expected to get valuable professional and personal experiences out of it while doing work that is dear to my heart. In the end, what I got out of working for AmeriCorps and The Nature Conservancy surpassed all my expectations. Professionally, my work on six different preserves provided huge experience. On the ground, I amassed a host of new skills--from GPS mapping to using and maintaining a chainsaw to barbed wire fence repair to long-term monitoring projects. I also led and worked with groups of volunteers and organized volunteer projects, interfaced with partner organizations, and worked under six different management styles. For most of the year, I was given projects and then was free to organize and manage their completion myself, so there was a lot of independent work and self-management. I was exposed to six different styles of managing and restoring preserves as well. Intellectually, it was an extremely valuable experience.
- I had the chance to do work that I enjoyed, was meaningful to me, and made a difference. I was treated with respect. These things are incredibly valuable. The entire experience helped cause me to think about more ways to make the world better. I started harvesting rainwater in my yard, in a very low-tech way, and I talked to other people about what I was doing and why. I already volunteered at the Desert Botanical Garden, but during this time I volunteered more than my required hours. One weekend, I was loading rocks into my car from a "free" ad on Craigslist, because I have been trying to xeriscape my yard and kill the grass over the past 3 years. As I was loading the rocks, I found myself thinking that these were going to look great in my backyard, but that it was too bad that nobody else would get to enjoy them, and it would be so much better if I were building a park or a community garden. Even though I have always had the desire to make the world a better place, I believe this



experience has brought it even more to the fore, and I am looking at ways to incorporate that into my life. I am hopeful that I will find work that will allow me to reflect that.

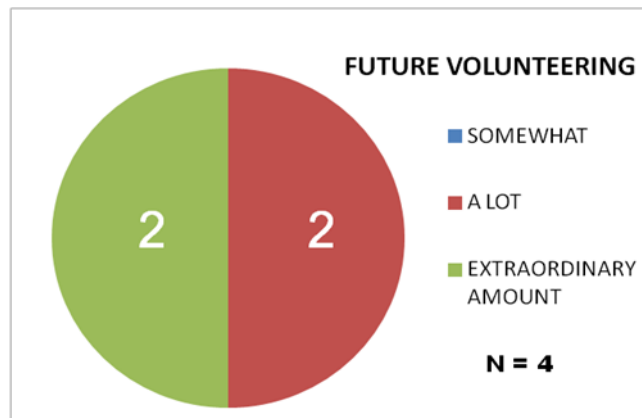
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**



**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- I like to visualize the field investigations part of the Water Investigations Program last year with many, many volunteers, both students and local agencies, and I am hopeful that will transpire based on the work I have been doing. It makes me smile because I know how much this program can contribute to conservation of water in Arizona, which is so needed, and I know how amazing is field investigations day when there are enough volunteers.
- My work with LEAF program for the 2nd year in a row was my biggest accomplishment. It was challenging and rewarding.
- Building the Zuni bowls at Muleshoe Ranch brings a smile to my face because doing that work was almost like play to me. Besides that I am really proud of the saplings we planted at ACP.
- I think if I have to choose a single accomplishment I think I would have to choose the time I spent at 3 Links Farm because I felt like I really helped the land manager a ton and she was so thankful.

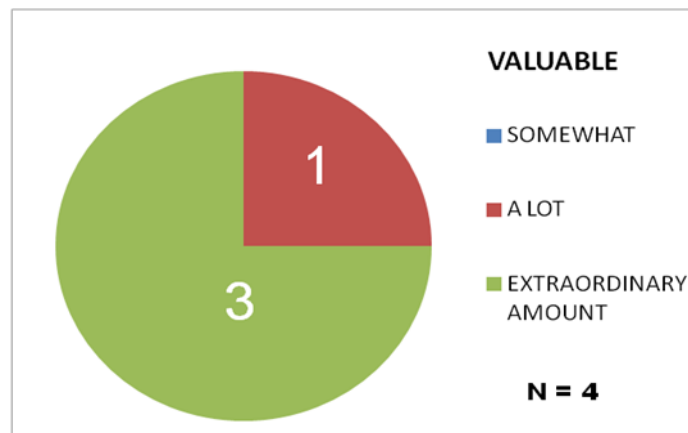
**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**



**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I would like to continue to volunteer depending on my schedule.
- My plan is to stay at home for a while and find some regional events to volunteer at. Then my plan is to look for a paid volunteer job anywhere in the country, possibly working on an organic farm.
- I just put my house on the market, and if it sells before I have a job offer, I will use some of the proceeds to travel overseas and do some volunteer work. I am hoping to visit Cambodia first, but depending on how much time I have, I am looking at possibly volunteering for a few weeks in Costa Rica with sea turtles as well. These are things I have always wanted to do and it seems that circumstances may make this more possible now than ever before.
- Now that I understand a little more about the importance of volunteers and how they help accomplish a lot of tasks for organizations that do not always have great resources, I think volunteering will be a larger part of my life.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**

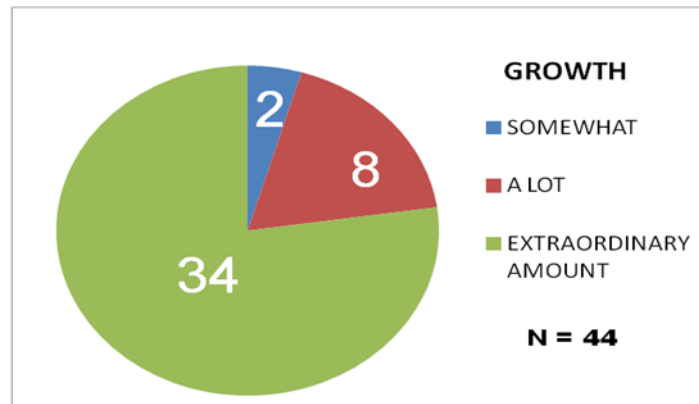


**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

- It's given me a great understanding of what the environment needs and how people giving their time are an asset to non-profit companies.
- My time as an AmeriCorps member has provided me a great way to network and establish many great relationships with partner organizations, who could possibly be future employers.
- I hope that this experience will help me find a job related to conservation. It has certainly made me more aware that I am going to be happiest in a service role, related to conservation or environmental education.
- AmeriCorps has allowed me to gain skills and experience that I never would have been able to get. It has gotten me out into my field of interest and put me in a great position to succeed in the future.

**EXIT FEEDBACK  
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA:  
UA WILDCAT CORPS**

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**



**Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.**

- This experience was very much like my Peace Corps experience. As my two years come to an end, I have made strong connections within my community. It seems like as the time is coming to a close, everything is coming together and so many opportunities have begun to come to the surface. Hopefully whoever takes our place at the center will be able to carry on from here.
- I learned a great deal about programs that are available to the public if they need assistance. Also for the programs that I learned about, I passed that information on to my friends and neighbors in the area who may benefit from them.
- Good people.
- I am extremely impressed with my growth in presentation skills and classroom management. I have now taught countless classrooms of 3rd and 6th graders and know how to make a lesson about groundwater captivating and fun. It has been rewarding to see these students open their minds to the science fields.
- Interacting with and educating the countless children that this service position connected me with was the reason this year was such a positive growth experience. I truly enjoy teaching students and seeing light bulbs go off in their head. I feel like an impact was made in every class that we either visited or visited us at the Sweetwater Wetlands.
- Working with elementary school children really granted me a positive new outlook on life. Their energy and simple happiness is great to see when they are learning and caring about their environment. I really enjoyed giving the students tours of the Sweetwater Wetlands and hearing their excitement at seeing all the desert creatures.
- The best part of my experience was getting to know staff dedicated to helping others within the library system. I also learned a lot about different organizations and programs that are working to make

Tucson a better community. I was able to work directly with some of these organizations and in turn help them to better serve their clients/students. I also made connections for when I'm finished with AmeriCorps so that I may continue to serve my community.

- The contacts I made from our focus group meetings and the information that I learned from the people at the meetings.
- As a graduate student in the college of education and a Wildcat Corps volunteer, I especially learned and improved my time management skills. I also now have a better understanding of Tucson, including its community, environment and culture. For example, I made numerous friends and learned a lot about the numerous non-profits in Tucson. Such information will be helpful as a full-time teacher of physics this coming year.
- I really appreciated the experience of seeing women take skills and feelings of empowerment from the Women's Literacy Network and put them to good use. They reported educational gains, employment gains and personal feelings of accomplishment and empowerment.
- Working with not just students, but also teachers made this year a positive growth experience.
- I became more confident in myself and my professional skills. I learned to work within the parameters of the organization, and realized that I had the power to make the Ambassador Program as good or as bad as I wanted to. Knowing that I influenced the outcomes of the program was a great learning experience in responsibility.
- This past year I provided water education to 3rd and 6th graders throughout Tucson. My experience was very positive, and I attribute this to the wonderful students, the great support I received from my supervisors at the WRRC, the AmeriCorps representatives at the University of Arizona, and my awesome co-volunteers. The students were eager to learn and made me motivated to teach and continue to teach.
- I gained valuable experience with kids in a learning environment and was lucky to not be seen as an authority figure—how many of them view their teachers. An example of this would be when a teacher would tell me her worst class was about to come in and the kids would be completely captivated by the lesson because it was a change of pace and engaging.
- Looking back on this year of service, the aspect that I consider to contribute the most to making this experience a positive one is the organization that I worked for, the International Rescue Committee. Not only is this organization well-run and organized, but so many inspiring people work here that inspire me myself. The clients that we serve have been some of the most incredible people that I have ever met—that has helped me learn and grow very much.
- I was able to help people in the community. I had the privilege of working with a parenting program and each week I would see how the program was changing their lives and the lives of their children.
- Attending several Health Fairs in Tucson and South Tucson over the last year (Hopefest, Reactivate, and Healthy Habits) helped me to learn first-hand about the health challenges and context in Tucson, Pima County, and Arizona. As a newcomer to this region, these events helped me connect directly to the target population that I was working to help through my internship.
- I gained significant skills in urban organic farming as well as teaching children from local schools about urban farming and eating healthfully. Seeing the positive effect the Tucson Village Farm had on children's eating habits was profound.

- This past service has given me the opportunity to continue my community involvement and serve my county.
- This past year was a positive growth experience for me because my skills as an employment specialist were expanded greatly by working with the employment staff at the International Rescue Committee. I became comfortable networking with local employers and advocating for clients. I learned to look outside the box of the usual industries (restaurants, hotels, janitorial) where clients have traditionally been placed and reach out to employers in diverse industries (dairy farms, thrift stores, recycling plants, etc). This has enabled me to tailor services - particularly job placements to clients' specific interests and past experiences.
- I learned new skills and discovered facets of my personality that were previously unknown to me. Not only was it empowering to see that I was capable of building structures and using tools, but that I was also capable of creating and implementing educational activities for children. I have a new-found interest in education and find that teaching children and working especially with children who have special needs is incredibly rewarding to me. On a few occasions I got to work with a special needs group from the Jewish Community Center who volunteered to help us plant at the farm.
- What made it a positive growth experience was the opportunity to work with great leaders and community organizers.
- What made my term the most rewarding was the diversity of tasks that I was able to participate in and therefore learn from. I grew as an educator, refined my methodologies and learned how to engage kids. Apart from this component of my service, I learned a great deal about growing food and I feel confident in my abilities in this area which I had little to no knowledge of previously. The other major positive aspect of my term was the people that I worked with. I cannot imagine a better work environment—one in which I care deeply for everyone that I work with and in which we accomplish a great deal of things that I am proud of.
- Looking back at the year, I have learned to write health education curriculum for volunteers to utilize while teaching health education classes. By doing research and finding the correct information, I have learned a lot of material myself.
- My time at Manzo Elementary has been so valuable to me and my experiences and knowledge that I have gained there will stick with me forever. This elementary school is very innovative and will hopefully transform the way we see playgrounds and learning spaces in the southwest. I know that the gardens I have helped build there will continue to grow and be used to educate our youth on conservation and ecology.
- I really enjoyed working and building relationships in the community.
- For me it has been a challenge just to stay at my job. I lived quite a distance away from my work place and every day I had to ride my bike for a several miles to get there even amidst studies in graduate school. Those 450 hours seem small but being a full-time student with many other responsibilities for school takes a while. I kept on chipping away and the work took me until the summer. When I finished my hours I felt accomplished but my work has not finished yet. My organization would still like some help. Just have to keep chipping away at the work and not get overwhelmed—that is how to continue to make a difference.
- The internship helped become more familiar with the administrative aspect of nonprofit organizations. I worked with several of them. There's a lot that going on behind the scene in non-profit organizations that I was never aware about.
- This year was positive in many ways. First I was able to take part in a multi-governmental event aimed at health both for the physical body and the health of the community at large. It was great to

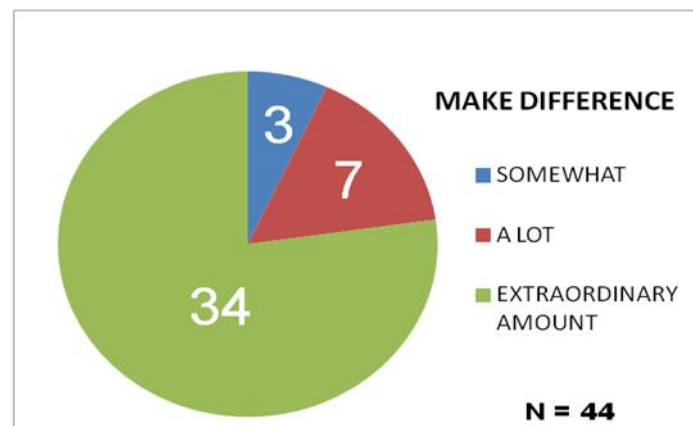
meet people and encourage this type of event, especially garnering support from those who would usually not partake in this type of event. Also, I got to learn a great deal about the inner workings of a small government. This is positive as it will help me in my future aspirations.

- Working with kids and becoming more able to communicate/understand/guide them was an amazing experience, and although I had trouble with my boss, it gave me valid experience in this type of field, which is important for me so that I might find a suitable path for my career outside of school.
- Seeing the kids i worked with grow and learn.
- A positive growth experience for me was seeing how much planning and hard work goes into putting a program together and how many people aid in making programs run smoothly. The nurse I worked with during my service built a dental hygiene program from scratch. She had to get supplies, find people who would participate in the program, advertise, and plan for health fairs with day cares and many other things. It takes a lot of hard work to make a program run smoothly and it was a great experience for me to see that with determination all things can have positive outcomes.
- The opportunity to work with youth in an underprivileged area in South Tucson was very rewarding to me. I was able to help them learn more about plants and eating healthy so they can pass it on to their family.
- A positive growth experience was the opportunity to also support a foreign country, in this case Mexico.
- Over the last year I was often asked to perform a role which was formerly very uncomfortable for me, that of the leader. I used to often doubt my ability to lead groups and to gain the trust of others, but having practiced these things for the past twelve months, I now find myself more confident not only as a leader, but as a person seeking their path in life. The trust in me that I gained through this experience will stay with me later in life, and propel me toward the goals I set for myself.
- I have not only seen and watched the projects develop and grow, but I have seen the children's skills advance and grow as well.
- I experienced various positive growth experiences during my year of service. One of those was helping with the Launch into Life program for the first time. It was a very eye-opening experience for the High School students as well as for me. By the end of the simulation the students were satisfied that they successfully went through the simulation and had money to spare. It was extremely rewarding to teach the professional pathways for the first time and watch the students apply what they learned in the classrooms directly to the simulation and succeed.
- I was able to work in an underserved community where I lived. Being on the south side for two years, and working with the library for one, I was able to make some lasting relationships. I also was able to work with the teens in the neighborhood on projects such as a community garden and IT training for the teens to teach classes at the library.
- Looking back at the year learning how to set up a successful program and seeking out participants for a new program has been a positive growth experience.
- Working in a real office environment was very eye-opening. It was such an amazing experience that enriched my skill set and provided me first-hand knowledge about professional relationships and networking.

- To be able to take control of a group of student and teach them something. I had to overcome many challenges. Learning to be strict with the students and to not allow them to take charge in the classroom. I also had to learn to talk in front of people and ask questions. Planning events was also a learning experience. I love every bit of my year as an AmeriCorps Volunteer.
- Working with students and seeing their improvement made this experience extremely positive for me. Helping women get their GED's was an extremely powerful experience.
- At the onset of my internship and AmeriCorps service, I was extremely excited to work with the International Rescue Committee in Immigration Services because the position united my interest in refugee resettlement and legal studies. Little did I know, my experience at the International Rescue Committee would impact my future plans and alter the course of my life forever. I feel fortunate to have worked with and learned from so many unique, inspiring individuals. The main highlight of my internship experience was interacting with refugees and asylees from all over the world. I was responsible for managing almost all of the immigration cases at the International Rescue Committee. As a result, I met a lot of different people and was exposed to a number of cultures. Personally, I have helped violent clients, clients who were previously banned from the International Rescue Committee, clients who blatantly lie about serious issues, and clients who try and cheat the system. As a result of my internship, I am taking a year off before law school to continue social work in refugee services, and I plan to pursue immigration or international humanitarian law in the future. I would like to continue helping people secure a future and reunite with family.
- Connecting with refugees from all over the world (Sudan, Nepal, Iraq) by visiting their home and often, being introduced to their customs. Having tea with an Iraqi family who just had a baby, actually having tea with all the cultures and noticing how they are each done differently with the same end result...making new friends.
- Prior to working with Iskashitaa Refugee Network, I did not understand first-hand the obstacles United Nations refugees faced once being resettled in the community. I am honored to know people who have restarted their lives and continue to be hopeful for the future.
- I have learned so much during my time with Iskashitaa that it is hard to know where to begin to explain how I have grown! Firstly, my knowledge of other cultures and countries has grown tremendously! Each new refugee that I meet shares tales from their homeland, their customs and traditions, and sometimes, homemade cuisines. This has helped me to broaden my understanding of other cultures and to really reformulate the perspectives of my pre-conceived ideas. Secondly, I feel as though I have also grown to be more patient. Working with volunteers and refugees who are usually not on time and sometimes do not show up at all has helped me to be a more, "go with the flow" type of person, which in this environment, I feel is important. Thirdly, I think my managing and coordination skills have greatly improved! Working with so many people to develop this program has really helped me to become a better organizer, more detail oriented and more efficient of a worker!
- Having rich deep connections with staff, community volunteers and esp. the refugees from all over the world. Spending time together, harvesting, preparing products, going to events, talking walks, and sharing meals have expanded my awareness/knowledge and level of empathy that truly is beyond words! I will be forever grateful.



**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**



**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- My time with the children from our neighborhood. They have become a part of my life and I will continue to remain in contact with them over the years.
- Giving information about available programs to people who are in need of assistance.
- I am smiling at the day the most distracting 6th grader was able to explain everything about our drinking water at the end of the lesson. This was the 5th of five straight 6th grade classes so at the end of an exhausting day, this was quite the reward. The child was wrangled into the lesson, became interested, and became an expert. We managed to turn his attitude from distracting to model learner.
- The single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to my face is when, after a presentation, a student tells me that s/he wants to grow up and be a scientist. This makes me smile because it means I have successfully delivered the message of the importance of science to that student. Inspiring students to create future goals of their own made this position quite worthwhile.
- I think my biggest accomplishment came about when in a 6th grade classroom, a female student (very bright) was describing to me how I could improve the Ground Water Flow model and I encouraged her to become an engineer through college schooling because it seemed like something she would really enjoy. It makes me happy because she seemed to take my suggestion in earnest.
- Training partner agencies on library programs and services. This is important because the library offers so many great things that many people don't know about. By sharing this information with other organizations, we are all able to better serve the community.
- People from different organizations talking and sharing their accomplishments with other organizations.
- The earth day event with the mountain bike course. Man, the kids had fun riding the course.
- A literacy tutee approached me and asked for a scholarship application. She has her GED and she wants to go to college now!

- Having students show up for writing center training and then watching them peer mentor in the writing center using skills they learned in the training.
- My best accomplishment was doing outreach at the high school, talking to hundreds of students about what I'm passionate about—and then having some come back, wanting to learn more! These students are the future of service and philanthropy (and probably future AmeriCorps members!).
- I felt very happy about the education I provided to the students over the course of the year. I know the kids enjoyed the presentations, and I believe we inspired many to think more deeply about human impact on the environment. I smile because I know my volunteer work is important, especially for the sake of future generations. In addition, I smile because I think I was able to demonstrate to the students the significance of what they learned in a way that they could understand and relate to.
- I was excited to watch the kids understand and question where they get their water. For example, one kid told me, after the lesson, that this knowledge changes everything for him. I could really see it on his face that his mind was blown when he realized his water came from underground.
- There is one client that I helped gain U.S. citizenship and her case always brings a smile to my face. She also worked with other volunteers/interns in my department to pass the citizenship test and when she did she called us and left a message that I will never forget. She was ecstatic and so appreciative of all the help she received from Immigration Services. It was especially exciting for her because she was so nervous throughout the entire process. What really makes me smile is not only her message, but the fact that all the people involved in helping her could celebrate her success together. It was an amazing day.
- It is very difficult to point out a single accomplishment that has brought a smile to my face but if I had to choose one I would say it was serving a specific client, advocating at doctor appointments for her, and getting to know her on a personal level. Although I cannot go into details of this client, I would have to say that I was truly honored to work with her and be there for her.
- I was able to learn how to do vision and hearing screening, which in turn helped some of those children who were not able to see or hear well, and we all know how important that is in education.
- I felt that I accomplished something important at the Healthy Habits Fair in South Tucson in January. I recruited some undergraduate public health students from the University of Arizona to volunteer at the health fair, which simultaneously helped them to learn about health issues in vulnerable communities, and helped the community learn more about healthy lifestyle habits.
- Seeing children that "hated" vegetables decide that they love them after harvesting them themselves.
- Being able to see the excitement of a child participant walk in the door excited to be there has always brought a smile to my face. Knowing that you are making a difference in someone's life and that they are excited to spend time with you is always a good feeling.
- When I reflect back on my time at the International Rescue Committee, the client that will always stand out in my mind is a young Sudanese man who came to the United States all alone, separated from his family by the war and unaware of where they are or if they are even still alive. He came to Tucson in Jan 2012 with such resilience and determination to start a new life and be a productive member of our community. Therefore, the accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to my face is the small role I played in helping him to become self-sufficient; I helped him secure a job at a local resort as a banquet server. He has been employed for five months and is saving every penny he can to pay for classes at Pima Community College in hopes of becoming a high school English teacher. This brings a huge smile to my face!

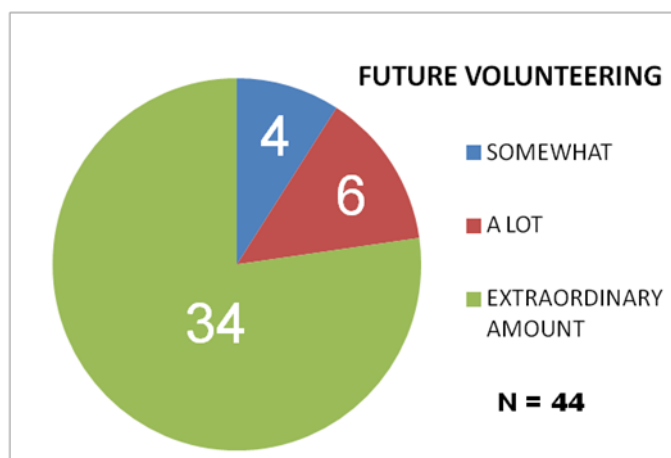
- I'm proudest of an educational activity that I created, which teaches children about native southwestern foods through a hands-on archaeological seed-finding activity. Hearing a handful of kids say that this was their favorite activity during their visit to the farm brought a huge smile to my face. Here I was getting to use my academic background in a creative way and connecting to kids, many of whom were hearing the word "archaeology" for the first time while learning about southwestern heritage and food ways. Furthermore, I am so grateful to have worked with a team that is open to new ideas and who were willing to think outside the box for this activity to come to fruition.
- Eating salad with children that they prepared and grew from their school garden.
- My proudest accomplishment was finishing a successful two weeks of Farm Camp. It conjures a smile because it was the successful culmination of months of work. The reactions from the kids throughout the week were positive, and with all the parents there telling us how much their kids loved camp, I felt as though we had really done what we set out to do: design a fun and educational week for the kids.
- Bringing health education to the public and getting the word out about what available help is out there for those who are unaware. It's important to educate the public about health issues in order to stay physically and mentally healthy.
- Seeing how therapeutic these gardens can be for the children. When they're having a bad day, working with the plants, chickens, and fish can definitely bring them back to feeling positive and happy.
- It has been a challenge to get people involved in gardening. The community seems interested but from a distance. Getting people to come and show up has been hard. In the background of the gardening, however, has always been the youth. They have been hanging out on our site during the day and playing basketball, watching as I push a wheelbarrow around and pick up weeds. One day I had a flat of tomatoes to plant and I asked the youth if they wanted to help. Most said no, but one said yes and like a waterfall they all followed behind. We planted those tomato plants and they helped until the last step was finished. Although it was a small step I feel like we know each other better and now we can talk about life and its issues like respect. The last time I passed by them all, they asked me, "Hey, do you need some help?" It brought a smile to my face.
- I coordinated the Thanksgiving dinner. Many kids recognized me because of that and I became a more familiar face for them. This made them more comfortable when they spoke with me.
- Successfully winning two grants. The smile is because these grants are to help the children of two low socio-economic schools get to school safely and in a healthy way, by walking. This something that is not done anymore for many reasons. It makes me happy to know that I was able to assist these schools, especially after hearing stories about many children not making it to school because they feared the walk.
- Writing and implementing a Self-Advocacy curriculum for refugees. It was a difficult task because of language barriers and cultural and system (health care, education) differences, but seeing the curriculum in action in the refugee homes with the Health Promotion Staff is a moment of pride and accomplishment.
- I have a smile in my face when a new volunteer is recruited and shares their experience with me—it can be gratifying and moving.
- To pick one out from the many: there were a few kids that had trouble coming out of their shells in the groups we had, and with time and taking notice to things that they liked I was able to eventually bring

them out and really connect with those around them. To help them feel more comfortable is something I am very proud of.

- My best accomplishment was 4-H camp. It was exhausting but I know how much the kids enjoyed it and that makes me feel good.
- The single accomplishment that brings a smile to my face is the number of young children we were able to teach about oral hygiene. It brings a smile to my face because teaching these children early will affect their health for the rest of their lives and I love that I was able to be a part of that.
- There have been so many accomplishments that bring smiles to my face! Anytime a refugee crafter receives payment from their hard work it makes me smile to know that we are directly helping them and their families. Anytime a sewing student's eyes light up when he/she finally understands a particular method makes me smile. When I get to reach out to other people and other organizations/communities to tell them of Iskashitaa's mission and they respond positively with perhaps some new ideas or desire for involvement, I smile!
- Building relationships with youth and watching them help each other in the garden, building teamwork to get the garden started and continuing planting, weeding & watering to see final product to taste from a fresh garden.
- Helping other people with my knowledge.
- A 13-year old girl came to the ropes course with no intention to climb, as she had a paralyzing fear of heights. I gave her some encouragement and let her know that I share her fear, and convinced her to put on a climbing harness and just watch the others climb, and encourage them. Thirty minutes later she completed one of the most difficult High Ropes Course challenges for people with a fear of heights, and when she came back down to the ground, I asked her to look up at the great column she had just climbed, and see how high up she went. Her reaction was one of the most emotional responses I've ever seen someone experience, as she begin crying and laughing uncontrollably at the same time. Nearly the entire group saw this and some comforted her while others praised and applauded the young girl. This memory makes me smile because I think of it and remember how a few kind words can go a long way, how beautiful we can be when we show our true selves to the world without fear, and how others can love us for it. I'm very happy to have participated in that moment.
- There are so many, but if I have to choose a single accomplishment it would have be harvesting thousands of pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables with my community that would have normally fallen to the ground and gone to the landfill. I am so proud to have served with Iskashitaa. It is model that should be expanded upon.
- I have to answer this question with the accomplishment that brought the most smiles. It had to be helping with LEAP Camp. The entire process of helping the kids plan as we train the counselors. The environment that the kids create is fun and exciting while still being educational and inviting. Then the actual camp happens and all you can do is smile when you see the counselors take the reins and interact with the campers. The bonds that the kids create while keeping to the schedule that they created. Watch them run the camp with minimal help from the adults is really something else. Why smile? You can't help it, you're proud of all the counselors and campers by the end of camp. You watch the campers who wouldn't say a word get up onstage and perform a skit with their pod. The laughter and smiles are contagious; no one wants to go home, campers, counselors and chaperons included.
- The success of iTNation. The program doubled in size right after I left and many of the teens that I taught continued in the program.

- The single accomplishment that brings a smile to my face is that I was able to help young children learn oral hygiene that will affect them forever.
- After planning and assisting in a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, then volunteering this free, direct service to the community was especially wonderful. Here, I prepared taxes (most in Spanish) for families and individuals and was able to give the good news of probable tax returns!
- My first newsletter for the county 4-H. I was very proud of myself and the positive feedback was the icing on the top.
- Seeing women gain self-confidence by participating in the program.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**



**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I will be a teacher, so I will be in community service for the rest of my life.
- Because of where I live and the full time job I have outside of where I live I do not have a lot of opportunities to volunteer. But if the opportunity presented itself I would help out.
- Red Cross. Other stuff.
- I am leaving for the Peace Corps in a month. I will be continuing to teach—this time teaching English in the Philippines. I see a fulfilling career ahead with plans to give a lot back to the community.
- This AmeriCorps experience has strengthened my desire to continue teaching to disadvantaged students. Thus, I have joined the Arizona Teaching Fellows, a two-year AmeriCorps program, and will be teaching as an Arizona middle-school science teacher this August.
- My plans are to see volunteering as an informal, everyday process, where being more sensitive to people of all ages and their needs comes more naturally in daily interactions.
- I will continue to work in the areas of literacy and education. I will be working with the library system to provide homework help, job help, and other services needed by those who visit the Literacy Center in the South Park neighborhood.
- If the opportunity presents itself and I have the time.
- I will be a full time teacher next year, hence I must wait to see how much time I will have available to help as a volunteer.
- I am honored and excited to continue with this project.
- I will be volunteering in Nepal as an ESL teacher and reporting back to my Nepali-speaking students here in the US.

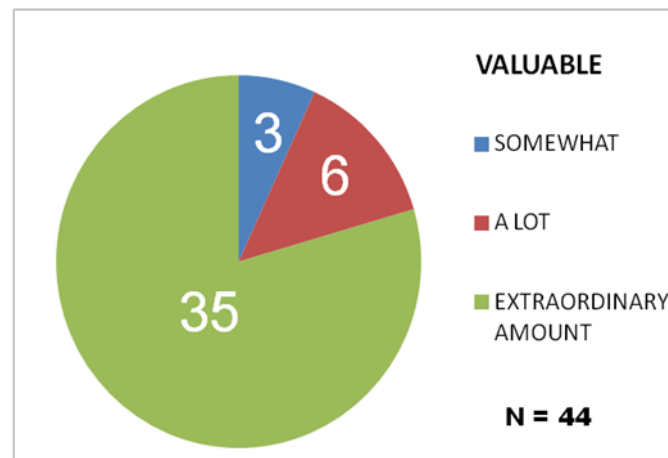
- I am joining the Peace Corps in August as a Teaching English for Livelihoods volunteer in Colombia.
- I plan to expand my community service internationally, hopefully visiting other countries and spreading my knowledge of water. This year, I plan to volunteer in my current residence, working with community gardens and groups of people in lower-income communities, especially the Latino populations.
- I am starting a landscaping business that will have a large service component for people in need.
- I am currently looking to volunteer until I find a job before law school. I would really like to work in social services for the next year and plan to pursue a career in International Humanitarian Law or Immigration Law for refugees and asylees.
- I would love to continue working with the refugee community in the next year. Although I will be taking a full-time job I still want to volunteer weekly with refugees.
- I will continue to volunteer in my children's schools as well as look for opportunities in the community to serve.
- I will continue to volunteer and provide community service in Tucson and Pima County as a Peace Corps Fellow at the University of Arizona in the next year. I will also continue to target underserved populations in my other professional activities.
- During my graduate program at the Jesuit School of Theology I will do various kinds of community service in Oakland.
- I will continue to stay involved wherever possible. I will be attending the university this fall and plan to become involved with school groups or projects.
- In two weeks, I am headed to Honduras for a month to volunteer at a home for street kids. Once I return, I would be interested in continuing to volunteer with the International Rescue Committee here in Tucson.
- I plan to keep working at my service site to create even more programming to reach a wider audience in the community. I'll be helping to develop a pre-K farm program, grant-writing, and acting as volunteer coordinator.
- Volunteering will always be a part of my life.
- I hope to continue to work at TVF. But regardless of if I am employed there, I plan to remain a presence. I will continue participating in community service throughout Tucson whenever and wherever I can.
- I am planning on doing another AmeriCorps position in the Phoenix area. In the future, I want to be involved in volunteering even more.
- I will be moving to New Mexico since I just graduated and applying for jobs in the field of Landscape Architecture.
- I hope to continue to work with the House of Neighborly Service. I would like to continue to build support in the South Tucson neighborhood. Currently I am a volunteer in the nearby area with literacy.

- I am planning on continuing to work with the current organization where I was volunteering because I feel like there is more work there for me to be done. We are working to find a way for me to continue after AmeriCorps.
- I plan on volunteering in a hospital, or possibly with another non-profit organization this year.
- In the next year I will be entering my first year at the Eller MBA program. I anticipate very little free time to volunteer, however I still plan to remain active with LSA and the South Tucson Healthy Habits campaign when plausible.
- My commitment to serve is as strong as ever, volunteering is a driving force of good in every community and I strive to continue that with organizations and issues I feel passionate about.
- I will continue to volunteer at Iskashitaa Refugee Network and with No More Deaths. I am also starting a grass-roots organization with a partner to empower youth and teach them life skills.
- Perhaps not next year, but my plans are to become involved as a Vista volunteer working on economic and community development.
- I will stay involved in my community through 4-H and other programs where i can volunteer.
- I plan on working within classrooms reading to students and helping teachers with whatever they may need. In the future I plan to take advantage of whatever volunteer opportunities are presented.
- I am very interested in continuing to work with Iskashitaa! I feel there is still so much more I can offer to this organization by being a part of it! I am open to signing on again for another Americorps position in the future!
- I would very much like to continue volunteering for Iskashitaa, and possibly create another way to serve refugees.
- I'm trying to find a replacement for the Project Yes 4-H Gardening Project. I will continue to volunteer until the replacement is found.
- Enroll again for AmeriCorps, and go back to my first site of work.
- I plan to volunteer at least a few times a month with my host agency, in addition to my making breakfasts at a local shelter and safe house for families in transition. After college, I hope to be a regular volunteer with an organization I believe in, like Tucson Village Farm, and encourage my friends and family to get involved in service, as well.
- I plan to take over a 4-H club in my area.
- I will continue to volunteer in my new community. I plan on working with the students of the west coast of Oahu and the Surfrider foundation.
- After my service I plan on continuing to devote time to Manzo Elementary. Although my service is technically over, I do not plan on discontinuing the work that I have contributed to there. So much progress has been made and yet there is still so much to be done, and not only at Manzo, but at elementary schools around the world as well. I plan on applying my skills and knowledge I have gained through my experience to other ecological, sustainable, or health related projects, especially in disadvantaged communities.



- I will always volunteer and participate in my community. I have no specific plans at this point but will involve myself in many volunteer opportunities.
- Giving back to our communities is always important. I am proud to volunteer in every community in which I live, and plan on continuing to pay it forward and give back in whichever place I will be living next year.
- I'm a certified leader with a local 4-H club, so my constant volunteering will not stop here. I love putting together projects for the youth.
- To work as a volunteer working with language and literacy.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**



**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

- My experiences have strengthened my understanding of community strengths and the opportunities that can be used to strengthen those existing strengths.
- Because of my experience as an Americorps volunteer I have met and worked with some individuals that I may work with in future employment.
- Americorps has put me in contact with many people in the nonprofit and university fields. I now have some great resources to help find employment and opportunities. Also, many kids have recognized me around Tucson from the presentations and field trips so I definitely have an expanded network and lots of little friends.
- My AmeriCorps experiences have solidified my desire to bring about change through teaching. I was motivated by my experiences to apply for another AmeriCorps position. It is extremely likely that the AZ Teaching Fellows were influenced in their decision to hire me for this fall based off of my current AmeriCorps service position. Overall, my AmeriCorps experiences have increased my desire to give back to the community.
- I have greatly improved on my communication skills and can project to large groups now. I am very grateful to this service for that.
- My experiences are very relevant to my career as a high school teacher. I've learned a lot about Tucson and what organizations exist to help people in various areas. I'm able to share this information with my students and their families.
- It looks good on my resume and will help me with the current job that I have, and future jobs.
- They helped me know what is available in the Tucson area so that as a teacher I can utilize the knowledge and resources in the classroom or as field visits. Also, I believe it helped with the acquisition of my current job.

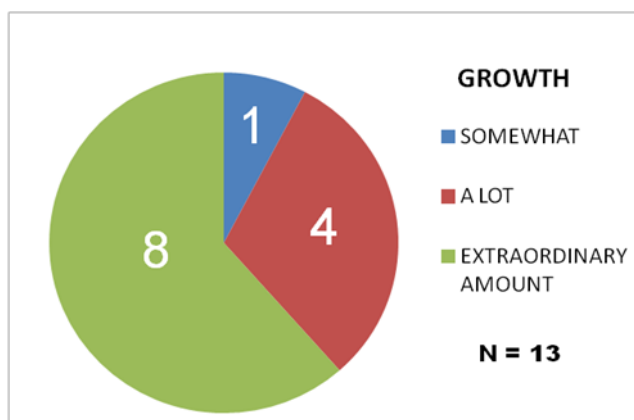
- This project has been a wonderful example to me of the power of community and the power of partnership. There is a chain reaction that continues on as a result of these efforts and it will continue on and on!
- I hope to build community partnerships between universities and high schools in the future.
- I would like to explore a career in international education or international/migration studies, and AmeriCorps has certainly strengthened my resolve to work in the nonprofit sector!
- Gaining access and understanding to the refugee community and the refugee resettlement process is a great way to continue to serve refugees and be a part of the resettlement as a career.
- My experience as an AmeriCorps volunteer will always be something I can speak positively about, and has already been helpful in finding employment. I believe employers seek out individuals who speak very highly of their previous positions, and I can do no less than to speak very highly of my experience teaching through AmeriCorps.
- These experiences have definitely directed my path toward alternative education and environmentalism.
- My patience level, leadership skills, knowledge of refugee issues and immigration law, and cross-cultural communication abilities have grown as a result of this experience. I now feel that I have the necessary tools to establish my future in social work and law.
- The additional experience I gained working with refugees in employment services directly relates to my career goals. I believe this experience will open up new opportunities for future employment, either with the International Rescue Committee or other resettlement agencies
- My Americorps experience has served as a pathway to future employment because it has allowed me to gain valuable leadership and management skills. I believe that this experience has provided me with an enriching and very colorful background.
- I became certified to do vision and hearing screenings, the training also trained me on educational laws regarding vision and hearing. I improved my communication, phone and typing skills.
- My Americorps experience allowed me to meet and interact with community leaders and health sector workers in Tucson and South Tucson, which will help me in my future employment.
- I am interested in working in organic farming as well as education in the future and my time at the Tucson Village Farm improved my skills with respect to both.
- I have been able to make many community contacts and network with people I will be working with in the future.
- I have picked up valuable skills such as grant-writing and have developed educational skills as well as people skills.
- I have met so many amazing people in Tucson who are engaged with the same issues that I am; people who I plan to remain in contact with in the months to come. I am sure that I will be able to find some employment with one of them. Tucson has a wonderful service community and my experience as an AmeriCorps member here has allowed me to tap into that community.

- My AmeriCorps experience at Manzo Elementary was the school that I based my thesis research on, so it will be a huge portion of my portfolio for jobs.
- As a future dentist, it is very important to educate the public about healthy teeth. I was able to write a curriculum about dental health which was both enjoyable and educational. This opportunity is a stepping stone for me to be able to see what kind of information is helpful to the public, and to identify the key points that need to be taught to the public. My goal while in dental school is be able to go to countries that have little or no health education for the public.
- As a current graduate student studying planning, I feel like this has been a real community development opportunity. Planning has a large component of community engagement. This volunteer position has been a very practical experience for my professional employment.
- My Americorps experience will show graduate school that I have experience with homeless and unaccompanied youth. The internship will also allow me to work with other non-profit organizations who work with homeless youth.
- Serving with Americorps and working on a community event opened up the opportunity to coordinate another small event for LSA over the summer months. Hopefully this will continue.
- My AmeriCorps placement allowed me to use problem-solving skills and manage my time effectively which will translate to job experience.
- Well for obvious reasons it serves as a pathway towards working with Vista, but generally the experience of working on various programs and working with children has expanded my abilities and therefore opportunities for the future.
- AmeriCorps has taught me the fundamentals of putting together a successful program in a community and how to be a leader. In the future I plan to be a member of many programs within my community in which I can make a difference.
- I feel as though all of the skills I have developed and strengthened during my time with this organization will be directly applicable to any future career or job that I may have.
- The opportunity to work with youth in a leadership teaching role has made me think about going back to get an education degree.
- They have served me as to having more confidence in myself.
- Thanks to the experience I received at the ropes course, I am qualified and applying for a position at the University of Arizona as an Instructional Specialist at the same location where I served as an AmeriCorps member.
- I am presently a Global Health & Development (College of PH) graduate student at the UA and because I haven't served in the Peace Corp I believe my time and experience serving my community through AmeriCorps will greatly assist my future in many ways.
- I have changed my career choice, because of the experiences during the last year. I was originally going to go into Nursing, now I have decided Teaching is for me.
- I am planning on becoming a teacher. Participating in AmeriCorps has helped me to love to serve and makes me excited to serve the future children I work with to the best of my abilities.

- Americorps with United Way has certainly opened the door to future job opportunities because it has given me office, networking, graphic design, grant writing, and online marketing experience. These qualifications will definitely enhance my resume.

**EXIT FEEDBACK**  
**VOLUNTEER CENTER OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA:**  
**YOUTH NOW! COLLABORATION**

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**

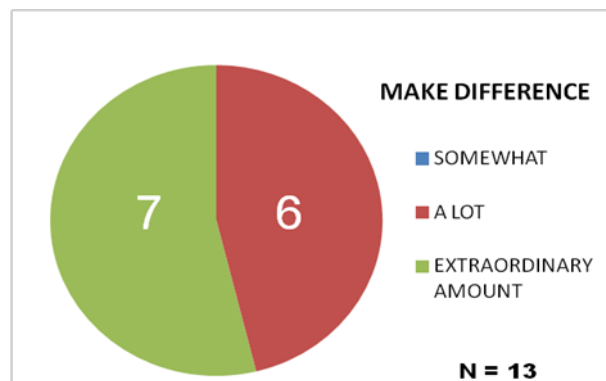


**Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.**

- Working with such a large number of people at my host site provided a number of opportunities to develop my conflict resolution skills and adaptive planning skills.
- I think the thing that allowed me to have a positive growth experience was AmeriCorps as a whole. Meeting and working in a new environment, meeting other members and working diligently with them, all while following personal passions in my service.
- The knowledge that my co-workers have and shared with me was a catalyst for professional growth for me. They were able to answer my questions about pest control, fertilization, and crop management. If they did not have the answer, they were always willing to direct me to more information.
- I think learning to work with a group in such a small space and being flexible was the most important growth experience I had. I had to do project planning in which some of my community partners were either rude or backed out. It was nice to have that experience.
- I have had the opportunity to do so many new things this past year. I had never asked for a donation, led a service project, recruited volunteers, or planned out a project start to finish. I have learned practical skills from these new experiences that I can use in the future.
- It was an amazing experience. I learned a lot about how to work with kids and how to work with a team under some pretty weird circumstances.

- Moving across the country to a place I had never even visited before was a really big growth experience. I had to become more independent and it made me appreciate my family and support system more as well as find a new appreciation for my home state.
- The past year was a positive experience in many ways. I enjoyed the staff and community members I worked with, the work I did and getting involved in the community. Going into schools and other community organizations to teach teen pregnancy prevention curriculum or tobacco prevention was the biggest area of growth for me. It was something I was uncomfortable with before, but as I did it I became more comfortable with going into schools and teach. I now really enjoy working in the schools and have had fun connecting with the youth I teach and recruiting them to get involved in other activities.
- The most positive growth was through the personal relationships that I formed with my coworkers and supervisors. Everyone was so supportive and trustworthy of my ability to learn and lead programs. I grew both personally and professionally.
- I was able to participate in a lot of new experiences and gain a lot of new skills.
- My positive growth experience came from my coworkers and the student body. They always were there for me and helping me improve.
- My confidence working with volunteers has improved tremendously over the past year. My first few weeks at the farm I was working with large volunteers groups of 25-75 kids and adults and the pace continued throughout the year. I really enjoyed working with my community and getting to know literally thousands of new people interested in farming and food.
- I was able to farm and gain a lot more experience in organic agriculture, working under new and changing circumstances, changing management and teaching others. I really value my experience in education and facilitation.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**



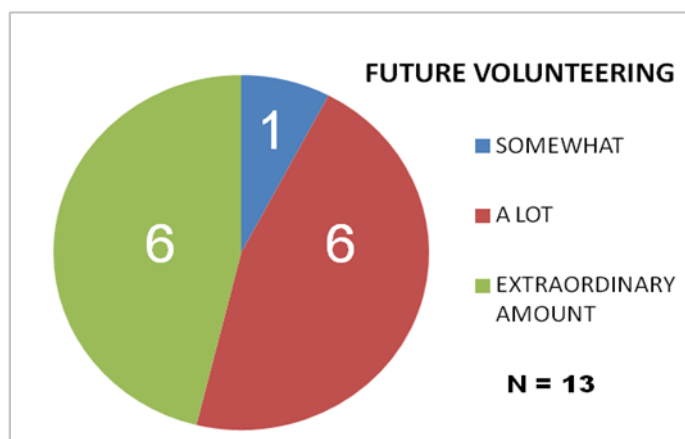
**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- Organizing students in the host site to form a service learning team and helping them to encourage other students and teachers to recycle by placing decorated recycling bins in the school. All the students had great fun with this project and they were all extremely proud of themselves as they presented the bins to the teachers.
- The youth that I worked with. I loved how excited they were for any activity, especially those in leadership positions. The joy they received from helping others, because that is the feeling I got.
- My biggest accomplishment was leading a group of toddlers around the farm. It was challenging because of their varied ages, interests, and attention spans. It brought a smile to my face to see the children using props from the compost pile to invent such imaginative play.
- My biggest accomplishment would be the very last project I co-led. At the end of the project, all the youth were exchanging addresses and emails and numbers to keep in touch. That really put a smile on my face. The 2nd best accomplishment would be when one of my semester-of-service youth came to our GYSD celebration and he told us how much he liked volunteering with us.
- It's so hard to narrow it down to just one but I think the thing that makes me smile most was a youth who participated in my Role Models project this summer and is continuing to volunteer at Casa de los Ninos--on his own. I think it is awesome that he enjoyed his volunteer experience during the Role Models project and was inspired to continue serving. That's what it's all about!
- Watching the kids enjoy what they are doing. Just seeing them accomplish something is amazing.
- Completing all my hours. I started the term late and had to really push myself to complete my hours. I loved my job but it could be very tiring at times. I also loved working with the youth and especially enjoyed working with new volunteers.
- The accomplishment that brings a smile to my face is the development and growth of the youth coalitions. I spent a significant amount of time recruiting and developing pieces for the youth coalition. Now we have solid coalitions in 3 communities and working with the youth in those coalitions has been an extremely enjoyable experience.

- My biggest accomplishment was creating a thriving troop of refugee girls at Catholic Social Services. The girls come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but were able to come together, learn, have fun, and complete service projects in the community. It makes me smile because it is a huge success not only in the girls' lives, but in the eyes of my organization.
- This summer I had a project with Equine Voices and the staff cried at the end of the project because of how much Volunteer Southern Arizona's relationship and the hard work of the youth meant to them. It makes me smile because it is one of few examples where I was shown that I made a difference.
- Reaching students who were unable to be reached by others brings a smile to my face because they needed someone and were able to be helped when they fretted that no one understood them.
- Helping people from all walks of life get closer, in some way, to the food they eat and watch them enjoy and revel in their new relationship. I especially remember one youth recently from a correctional facility tasting fresh spinach for the first time—that he had picked. He said, at 17 years old, he had never had a fresh vegetable in his life and couldn't believe the flavor. That's a huge accomplishment!
- My daily work provided an opportunity for me to interact with all kinds of members from my community and listen to their stories, situations and circumstances. The fact that I was able to help these people, who share my home, to eat healthier, make more informed choices and to touch the soil, plant seeds and harvest fresh, organic food brings a huge smile to my face. That is the greatest gift I was given this year, during my AmeriCorps service.



**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**

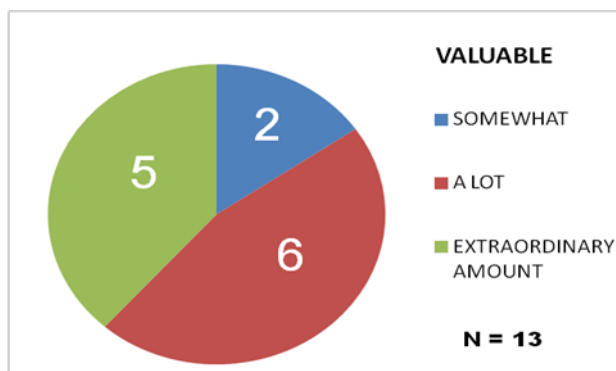


**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I will be looking at what programs especially programs involving conservation are available in the community I will be moving to.
- I will continue to volunteer with local organizations such as Girl Scouts, Habitat for Humanity, and Feed My Starving Children. All organizations I have volunteered with before, but I will look for more opportunities that serve my local communities.
- I plan on working for a Peace and Leadership retreat center for children.
- In the future, I will look for community opportunities to volunteer. I am also still helping out El Rio Health Center. Also, I hope to go to Africa some day.
- I am in the process of applying to the Youth in Action AmeriCorps program in Flagstaff.
- I will keep volunteering. I intend to look up the Boston Alums. I also will keep up the volunteering I do online (as a writer and editor of a community blog). I will definitely volunteer at WGBH.
- I plan on volunteering at an animal shelter and a marine mammal stranding network back in my home state of Washington and maybe even at a nursery. I love volunteering I plan on always being an active volunteer and encouraging others to do so as well.
- I will continue to work in my current volunteer position working with youth. I will probably look for new and additional ways to volunteer in the upcoming months. Also when I have volunteer options I will take advantage of them because I enjoy volunteering.
- I am taking six months off before starting my next job, and I plan to be volunteering during that time.
- I currently volunteer with Tucson Food Day's planning committee and El Rio Health Clinics Health Education Project. When I have some more free time I am looking into volunteering on an organic farm or community garden.

- I plan to help out with City High school as much as possible and I want to join Volunteer Literacy Tutors of Arizona.
- I plan to continue volunteering with the Community Food Bank's youth and gardening programs. I have also committed to volunteering with several food/agricultural based networks in Tucson.
- I plan to volunteer with other local organizations working for food justice and security here in Tucson and know that whatever the future brings me I will look for ways to stay involved in the food culture of my community.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**



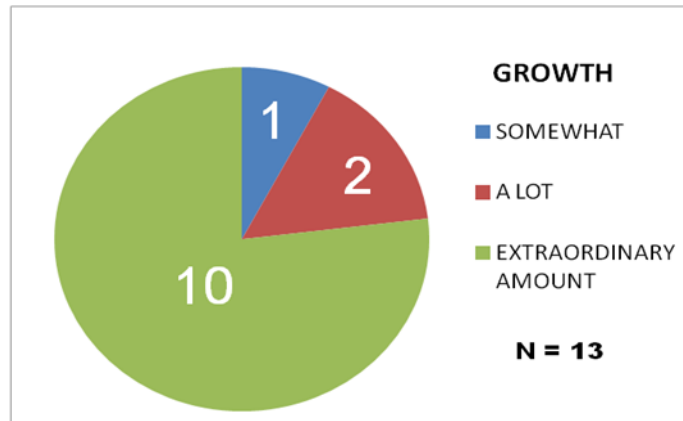
**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

- My knowledge gained from working at the farm will help me volunteer on other farms in the community. I have met many other farmers as a result of my AmeriCorps position and I plan on volunteering and learning from them.
- Being new to Tucson, it gave me a pathway to become familiar with the community and also meeting more community members, especially those who play roles in service type programs and have similar interests as myself.
- It gave me an official capacity with which to help my host site that I feel was a great help in obtaining resources for the site's after-school program.
- AmeriCorps has taught me so many skills. I have received employment because of my experience this year. I am so thankful for that.
- I think that spending my gap year serving in AmeriCorps definitely made me a more competitive graduate school applicant. Because I was accepted into a program at NAU, I will be able to pursue a career as a speech pathologist.
- So I've always wanted to teach but not sure what grade. Much to my surprise, YVC has taught me that I want to teach middle school. Who knew?
- I have gained invaluable experience in both informal environmental education and animal handling and training. They have already helped me secure a temporary position at the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium in Tacoma, Washington.

- My AmeriCorps experience allowed me to connect with the community I live in. I learned more about the community and now I have connections with community members. I also have been hired by the county, so my experience has allowed me to move into a full time position.
- AmeriCorps has given me necessary non-profit experience to work in the community service field.
- I have made some connections through my AmeriCorps experience, but have been unsuccessful at finding a job after two months of intense searching. I'm not sure if people don't know what AmeriCorps is or don't care that much about it because I have not seen any significant advantage of having AmeriCorps on my resume as of yet.
- The amount of connections I have made in the community is invaluable.
- Throughout my year-long service I have made invaluable connections with many of the farmers and educators in my community. I hope to continue developing these relationships and hopefully something will lead to a permanent position in the future.
- I am planning to work part time with the non-profit I served with this year and know that when I look for future jobs in this field (food justice, education and sustainable agriculture) I may have a leg up. I also think AmeriCorps on my resume and especially the education award will help me be able to attend college and procure a degree.

**EXIT FEEDBACK  
COMMUNITY COUNT, INC. (YAVAPAI)**

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps serve as a positive growth experience?**

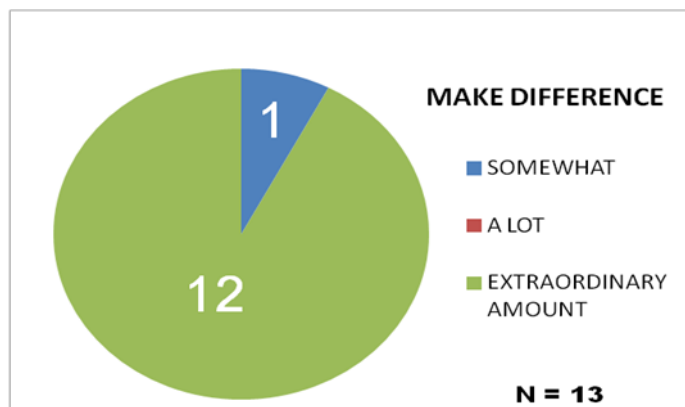


**Looking back at the year, what made it a positive growth experience for you? Provide a brief example if this will enrich your response.**

- For my site I work on a project which I expanded greatly this year. After putting in all the extra hours of collecting donations, organizing, planning, etc., it was great to have all the events end well. It showed me what I can accomplish.
- My growth experience was so spectacular because of my site supervisor. She is patient, kind, and energetic. She taught me more about myself and gave me a safe and nurturing place to love, grow, share, and play.
- Everything that I experienced was a opportunity for growth, the good times as well as the trying times. There was many eye opening experiences for me and many things revealed to me about myself—way too many to describe in a brief example!
- The self-motivated process made my time as an Americorps volunteer a positive growth experience. While in previous education or employment positions, I was able to simply follow a standard set of expectations, I learned in the past year that true success comes from setting your own goals and pushing yourself to achieve them.
- This was a nice experience for someone who is beginning their career.
- My year was amazing. My supervisor is wonderful because she gave me the freedom to explore things that I was interested in at camp as well as the space to work on my projects. The staff members that work at Willow Springs in the summer, as well as the off season, are great people and I was excited to work with them to make camp a positive experience for the girls.
- The past two years that I have served with AmeriCorps have been a growing experience for me. I now have ties in the Prescott Community through leadership programs, school systems, students, mentors and friends. I have been able to positively influence the lives of young men and women whom will grow up to be instrumental parts of their community.

- The opportunity to become a part of my home city's public education organization, and to see from an up-close vantage point the challenges created by lack of funding for our schools, brought an unexpected level of pain and unprecedented need to create relationships and systems to begin to make an impact and work for lasting change.
- My position challenged me in many ways. It tested my ability to communicate effectively and self direct tasks and projects. I believe that I have made huge improvements in both those areas.
- My positive growth experience with AmeriCorps is just the chances I was given to change young people lives through play and learning.
- Even though it was my second year in AmeriCorps, this year in particular has marked a huge growth for me, personally and professionally. I found my confidence, my skills grew, and my appreciation for the experience I have had has really sunk in. I know now how to use the things I've learned to make my theatrical dreams come true.
- Learning to work in an office setting with more responsibilities than I have ever had before has been challenging this year. It has taught me many new methods of organization and time management that I am grateful for and will carry forward.
- Positive personal growth in my self esteem and ability to work with people and plan events.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps provide an opportunity to make a difference for others?**

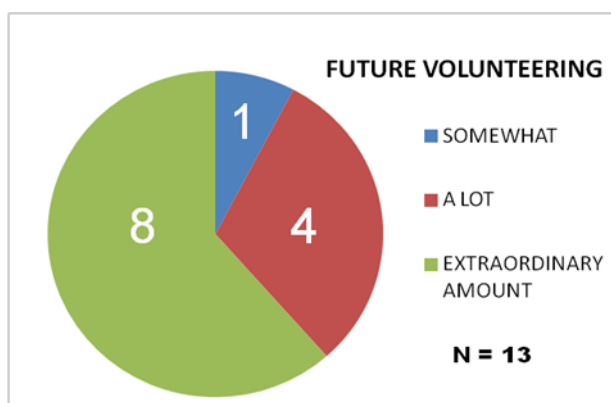


**What was the single accomplishment that brings the biggest smile to your face? Why the smile?**

- Having over 100 people come to the Priceless Prom and only having a couple people leave without getting a dress. It brings a smile to my face because my goal was to have a variety so great that anyone coming in could leave with something.
- My biggest accomplishment was interacting and teaching staff during the summer camp staff training. I got the opportunity to share knowledge and experience while bonding with the members of the summer staff. Further, I led impactful workshops on inclusive language and programming as well as how to report suspected abuse and neglect. I feel that these two workshops offered not only a lot of information but will help the staff meet the needs of campers.

- The fact that I stuck through till the end of my obligation,
- My biggest accomplishment was throwing a successful Volunteer Appreciation luncheon for 50 people for less than \$200. I was proud to have been able to round up enough community donations and support from other local agencies in order to book a clubhouse dining room, provide a delicious meal with dessert, as well as offer appreciation gifts and free raffle prizes. When given this task, I was not sure I would be able to meet the Program Director's expectations for her vision, but I am proud to have been able to pull enough strings to make the event a success.
- Bonding with the most difficult child at my site program.
- I think the Kindness Kits in each unit bring a smile to my face. They taught girls how to talk about bullying with their peers and I think it really helped the girls because they loved it.
- This year I was able to start a pilot program at North Star. The students in this program were eighth graders who wanted to make a difference in their community, and become leaders, but just did not know how. The program started off with 20 students who were handpicked by their teachers. The name of this program is Teens Taking Action. Teens Taking Action was a program that was through the school that met every other Friday in study hour. By the end of the year, the students not only created a project that was along the lines of "Pay it Forward," and win the MatForce Video Contest, but they also persuaded the Vice Principal to have the program every single Friday because they liked it so much. When the students told me that they would like the program to be every week I couldn't help but smile. I was an instrumental role in helping these students turn into leaders who wanted to know more!
- The first-ever Volunteers in Schools Open House succeeded beyond my wildest dreams, and raised awareness and engagement within our community to strengthen our schools through voluntarism and collaboration. Seeing us published in the Daily Courier several times, and securing a FT VISTA member to carry the program to its next level put me on the path of leaving a legacy.
- I put together two resources for the Yavapai Reentry Project, which took a long time to compile, but seeing the final products being mailed out and distributed has been very satisfying.
- My accomplishment involves a 6th grader who was failing with an overall score of 16% (all his classes). He doesn't like the female teachers at all. So I took him under my wing, talked to his teachers and got all his work he had to make up to pass. We sat down day after day hitting the books and really making up his homework and finding every way possible to get his grade up. Three weeks later he soared up to a 65%. Very good news. He may not like his female teachers but I was happy I was there to help him boost his grade from a male point of view. It makes me smile because he trusted me and no one else to help him and when no one else thought he could do it, I knew he could and he did.
- In all of the things I have accomplished and the changes I've helped administer during my tenure, I think the most impactful was the experience I had on the last Family/Children's Theatre show here at the PCA. It had just been announced that the school shows for the 2012-2013 season and beyond were being phased out, so this was our last hurrah. Both the kids in the show and audience were thrilled with the experience of the show; and in their show evaluations at the end of the run, my heart was melted when many of the kids wrote how "that light guy" (me) was great. Knowing they are the future of the craft I love so much, their enthusiasm made me feel like I'm leaving it in good hands.
- Matching children with great mentors has been excellent all year. Seeing the smiles on their faces makes me happy.
- Getting parents involved in volunteer activities. Watching them grow and enjoy their experience.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps strengthen your commitment to volunteer in the future?**

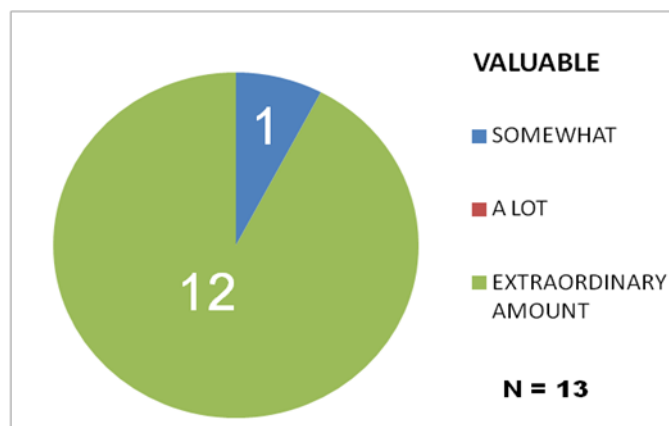


**What are your plans regarding volunteering or providing community service next year? What are your plans in the future?**

- I am planning on volunteering on my own time with North Star next year and helping out with Priceless Prom as much as I can.
- I feel that volunteering has always been a part of my life. My active involvement in the community I am a part of is vital to my sanity and happiness.
- The line of work I am pursuing is based on helping others and being of service. I do not believe that I would feel confident in doing so if not for the experience I just had!
- I plan to continue to support The Prescott Area Women's Shelter by remaining on their volunteer list.
- I plan to stay a Big Sister, Day of the Lake, and volunteer for activities in the community as they arise.
- I will continue to volunteer through my life and I am not sure what that will look like in the future.
- I am still going to be involved in the AmeriCorps National Days of Service in my community in the upcoming years. I have always been someone who likes to volunteer but AmeriCorps has showed me the behind the scenes work of volunteering and how it really truly can change a life.
- My intention is to continue to serve my site as a skilled volunteer alongside our VISTA member for approximately 10 hours weekly. My future at present is a bit cloudy due to an unexpected health challenge that demands my attention.
- I will be starting graduate school and hopefully volunteering with an organization to enrich my degree.
- I have no clue but I am more open to volunteering now then I was last year or in all my life.
- Continuing to partner with local non-profits through my theatre, The@trics.
- I plan to re-enroll with Big Brothers Big Sisters for a second AmeriCorps year and continue to volunteer with underprivileged youth in the Prescott community.

- I will continue to be a volunteer with the school. I will also get my children engaged in volunteer activities as I see the benefits now more than ever.

**To what extent did the past year with AmeriCorps make you more employable or a more valuable volunteer?**



**How have your AmeriCorps experiences served as a pathway to future employment or to expanded roles in the community?**

- They've expanded my roles in the community because I have gone out into the middle schools to advocate for the importance of community service.
- I have many more life, personal, and professional skills. I imagine that I can't even name all the ways in which I have grown and changed in the past 9 months.
- It has equipped me with skills that I was unfamiliar with before serving as a AmeriCorps member. Utilizing resources from within the community as well as expanding on current procedures and operations currently in place in order to allow for a more efficient operation.
- During my last month of service, I was able to transition into a position as Case Manager with another community agency serving at-risk youth.
- It opened the door for possible employment opportunities and networking.
- It has served as a pathway to future employment at camps.
- AmeriCorps has given me the tools to a very bright future. I am now able to reach out in my community and give more through the connections that I have made from my term of service.
- In an economically challenged city where employment opportunities are limited, I can contribute to public education as a liaison, a bridge-builder, between community organizations whose missions overlap. We cannot solve our problems with the very same thinking that birthed them—that much I do know. I've offered my services to the umbrella organization, Serve Yavapai, along with Community Counts, as a trained facilitator in volunteer engagement. More will be revealed as to whether I am able to develop this into an occasionally-compensated opportunity.
- I wasn't sure what direction I wanted to go in until I served with AmeriCorps, but I'm sure that the nonprofit sector is where I'd like to stay.



- Others have seen how hard I work and for what little I made impacted them enough to offer me jobs elsewhere.
- These experiences helped me to expand my contacts, focus my efforts to include non-profits or community service organizations, and reinforce my belief that the only way we get through this is getting through it together.
- This AmeriCorps year will continue to build my resume and provide me with more experience in youth services. It will also greatly help to prepare me for further professional work environments.
- I was offered a job at my site.

## Background of the Evaluator

Barry Kibel, Ph.D.



Barry is an innovator in the field of program evaluation and impact measurement. Over his career, he has designed and led the implementation of evaluations for large Federal programs, State initiatives, and diverse local programs. His Journey Mapping tool was the first-ever interactive evaluation to be conducted using the Internet and has been adopted for use by hundreds of

transformation-focused programs. His approach to impact measurement is based on mapping results using one to multiple developmental ladders. Barry is author of Success Stories as Hard Data and numerous professional publications. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley in City and Regional Planning; his early studies were in applied mathematics. He resides in Tucson.

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